The
COMMONWEAL
A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs
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CONTENTS

WEEK BY WEEK		377
WORKING HIS SALVATION (*Cartoon*)	*J. C.*	379
TWILIGHT OF THE PRESS	*Ernest A. Dewey*	380
CANADA'S FARM POLICY	*Francis Flaherty*	382
"MEGALOPOLITANA"	*Barry Byrne*	384
THE MEXICAN CRISIS	*Randall Pond*	387
COMMUNICATIONS		389
THE SCREEN	*Philip T. Hartung*	390
BOOKS OF THE DAY		391
THE INNER FORUM		394

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Week by Week

THE SOCIAL action school which is in session at the archdiocesan seminary, Mundelein, Illinois, affords an interesting indication of the continued interest in social problems of the Church in America. This is the first summer school of the sort to be held in Chicago; the enrollment — nearly 200 priests from all over the country—is encouragingly large. And there are other similar schools in other parts of the country. A word should also be said about the spread of the lay apostolate for social action which sprang from the New York Catholic Worker group and which keeps acquiring new centers of influence through the activities of Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and their associates. In Washington, D. C., in Chicago (which publishes its own *Catholic Worker*), in Houma, Louisiana, in Boston, Akron, Troy, N. Y., St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee and Detroit, to mention only the larger centers, groups of laymen are at work trying, in whatever ways are opportune, to spread the social ideas which are usually associated with the social encyclicals and which are clearly implicit in the Gospels. An indication of the vitality of all this lies in the differences between the centers and their common parent. Here is no hard and fast organization, no specific "national objective." Each local unit devotes itself to particular problems which are close at hand. In Washington it is a house of hospitality for Negroes; in Chicago and Akron it is feeding undernourished children; in Boston it is a house of hospitality and breadline for men; in Pittsburgh it is action on the "labor front." The growth of the Catholic Worker idea in the past few years, its diversity and adaptability, is a heartening phenomenon in our national life.

Catholic Workers

THE NATIONAL HEALTH CONFERENCE, just ended in Washington, by design adopted no resolutions and made no commitments. It was meant only to call forth from professional and general groups the widest possible expression of opinion on the health needs of the nation. But though of little accomplishment, it is of great presage: not so much because there was envisaged the principle of government aid (for government aid is inevitable), as because of the scale of that vision and the evident happy belief, so much in tune with the times, that the way to solve is to spend. The technical committee on medical care presented a ten-year plan for medical servicing of the country that reads like the collectivist's dream: intensified health and hygiene drives on all fronts, new hospitals and centers, health insurance, grants for the medically needy, all running into billions, half of them chargeable to the federal government and half to particular states and localities. Though this is still in the realm of the ideal, the consensus was in a general way for it. With whatever modifications, it will undoubtedly reach Congress as projected legislation.

Whither American Medicine?

WHAT IS strange and disturbing to the lay onlooker anxious for medicine to retain as much of its old private, responsible character as possible in the face of new social needs, is the absence of any compelling opposition. Dr. Fishbein, A. M. A., stalwart against socialization, and Dr. Abell, A. M. A. president, said true things about the impracticability of central control, about the danger of political interference, about the unwisdom of treating the present emergency as permanent. But there seemingly was no rallying, truly significant statement of the objection, on the basis of social principle, to a sudden, sweeping shift of responsibility; no constructive plan for

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healthily balancing government action by fostering voluntary health insurance and group practice. The first problem in American medicine is to make and keep the small, solvent citizen medically self-supporting. If in the years immediately ahead this class is more and more submerged by measures for socialization, the fault will lie largely with the great body of organized medicine for failing to develop, and too often actively opposing, the voluntary-group technique.

How Far Nationalization?

CATHOLIC social-economic tradition, taught and exemplified in the great encyclicals of Pope Pius XI and his immediate predecessors, certainly favors private property, and it no less certainly conceives the possibility of the common welfare requiring that certain forms of property should be held by the state. In England the state has recently nationalized coal royalties, and the Catholic Bishop of Pella, noting this, and also the government's electricity, transport, water supply and broadcasting activities, raised the question last month, "How far does all this square with Catholic teaching on the rights of private property?" The *Catholic Herald,* with characteristic enterprise, carried on the probing by seeking the opinion of Reverend O'Hea, secretary of the Catholic Social Guild, Reverend Bernard Goode, professor at Old Hall, Ware, and Mr. Eric Gill. Father O'Hea objects to Catholic doctrine being set forth as a series of prohibitions, in this case preventing the nationalization of such and such property. The case of a "particular industry or source of material must be argued on its merits." The Catholic doctrine is to be conceived "as something positive rather than negative—though prohibitions there will be; as itself a driving force, a body of 'directives' . . . indicating the lines for progress."

FATHER GOODE distinguishes the means of industrial production from other property and says, "It may become desirable to evolve some new form of collective, though not necessarily state, control over the more important branches of industry." He quotes from the Dictionaire de Théologie Catholique a passage describing the collective character of mass-industry, which concludes: "We must not be surprised if the régime of production becomes more and more communitary." Mr. Eric Gill sums up his interesting views: "In my humble and quite unauthoritative opinion, all forms of hidden treasure are in the nature of things public property, and coal mining and all such collective works (railways, roads, posts and telegraphs), when the work is a service to persons in general rather than to individuals, might more justly and no less efficiently be run for public rather than private profit." Whatever the merits of a particular case may be, it is easy to agree with Father Goode that "it is very difficult for them [Catholic principles] to find expression at a time when men are unwilling to accept the responsibility of ownership, when the state is too weak to control property without expropriating the owners; and when the distribution of property is too unequal to permit of a stable social order."

The Risks of Adventure

THERE WILL always be venturesome persons who seek out their fortunes in foreign lands. They take their very definition as venturesome from the risks and perils involved in their undertakings. If unfortunately they meet with reverses, none can be unduly surprised. But, of course, there are reverses and reverses, and various degrees of justification attached. Foreign entrepreneurs are not necessarily exploiters of their employees or unmitigated burdens to their homelands. On the contrary, they are often a boon which raises considerably the standard of living of an undeveloped country; and not infrequently they are a great source of wealth to their fatherlands. In these and similar beneficent rôles they accordingly deserve consideration and solicitude. If, however, their contribution to the country of adoption is of questionable value, or, though valuable, has been obtained through questionable means such as the corruption of public officials and artificially fomented revolts, then a just retribution may deprive them of their property or freedom of action. Moreover, if the representations and acts of their own governments have often so exceeded the limits of propriety as to constitute unwarranted outside interference in the political affairs of a sovereign power, then there is small wonder that a démarche short of invasion goes unheeded. Without wishing to judge the particular case of American enterprise in Mexico now at issue between the two governments, nor the legitimacy of the action of our state department in sending the recent stiff memorandum to the Mexican ambassador, we would simply point out that the record of American capital and "dollar diplomacy" in Latin America is far from savory. It may be that evil precedents are obscuring the real merits of the currently controverted cases, but these cases do not seem clear enough to warrant any thought of breaking up the "good neighbor" policy yet.

Oslo Powers and League

SEVEN OF THE smaller northern European nations—Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg—have been attempting to develop a common policy to meet the threatening pressure of European international affairs. Individually they are terribly menaced by the contest of greater powers to the south; united they

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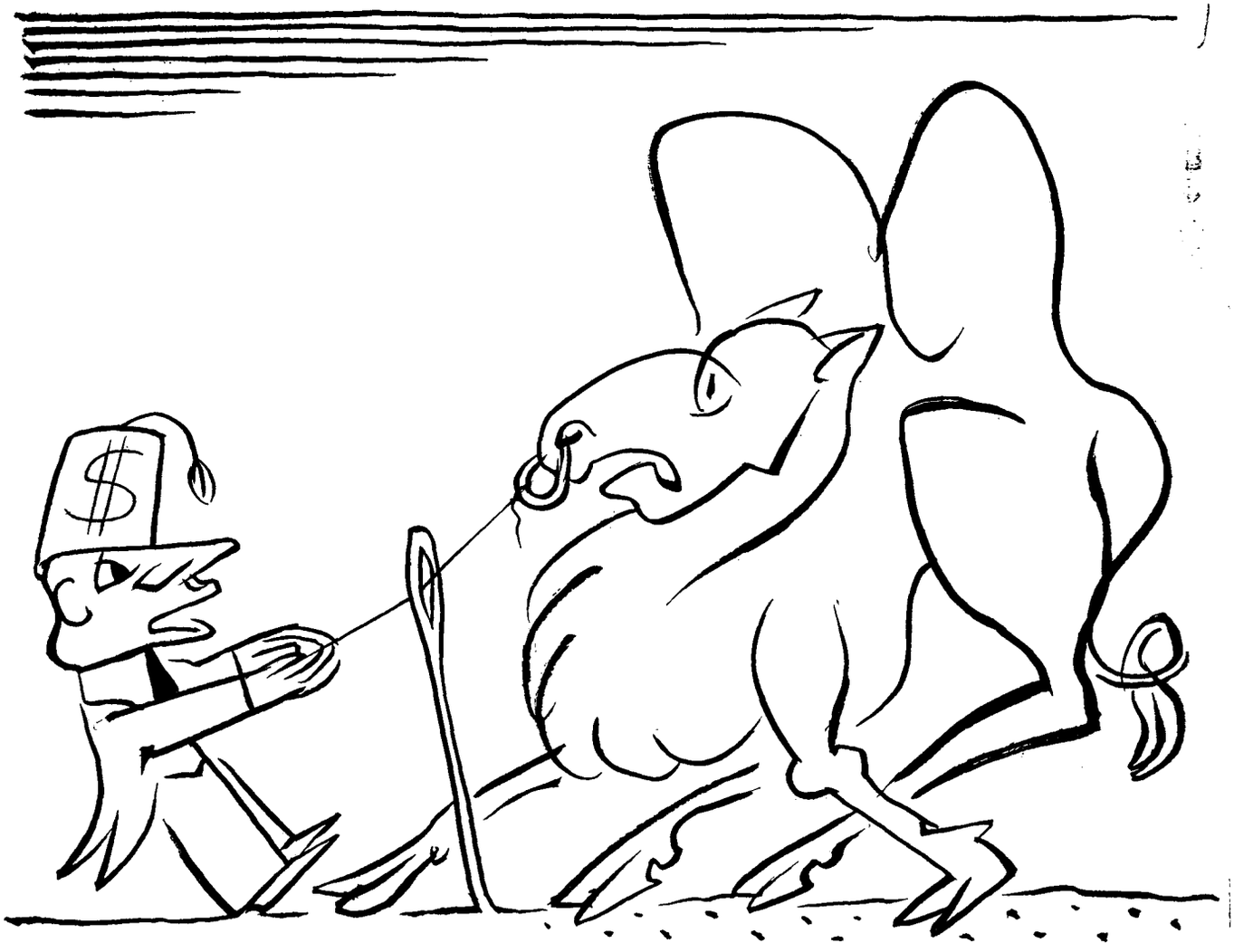

Working His Salvation

could present a formidable bloc of neutrality. They are bound in different degrees by geography, economy and various exchanges to England, France and Germany, and whether they will be able to keep from the center of the European vortex, or will succeed in establishing their mass at the edge of the whirling continent, thus slowing its careening course, is uncertain. The results of the recent conference of the "Oslo Powers" in Copenhagen were apparently not greeted with much enthusiasm or optimism in the seven nations. The only positive action taken was at the further expense of the League of Nations. The countries decided to extract a specific declaration from the next Geneva meeting, reserving to each member freedom to adopt or reject sanctions. Thus Europe is another step away from general collaboration. It is hoped that the Oslo Powers can make up this distance by using their increased local solidarity to bring nearer the "reconciliation in an impartial and independent spirit toward different groups of powers" which they desire. It is unfortunate that to work toward that, they must form still another "group of powers" in fractured Europe.

Rumblings of Racism

THE DAILY PRESS continues to report racist utterances and actions from Italy; one is forced to believe what Jewish leaders have long feared, that anti-Semitism is being made an official part of Italian fascist doctrine. During the last few days Achille Starace, secretary general of the Fascist party, has stated that the principal activity of all Italian institutes of culture during the coming year will be the popularization of "Fascist principles on the subject of race." The names of the university professors who drew up the racist report described last week in THE COMMONWEAL have been made public. A day or two later it was announced that Dr. Paul Cremona, a Maltese Catholic subject of Great Britain and the dean of foreign corre-

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spondents in Rome, had been asked to leave Italy, presumably because he was suspected (falsely, as it happens) of being a Jew. It is also reported that the representative of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has been expelled and that all persons entering Italy are now asked to name their "religion" by frontier officials. It is difficult to understand the reasons for this emergent anti-Semitism.

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT the Italians do not desire an influx of Jewish refugees from Austria and Germany; it is likely that the conquest of Abyssinia has added to the intensity of racial problems in Italy's African empire. Anti-Semitism obviously has its political advantages in adding to British troubles in Palestine and in cementing the Rome-Berlin axis. And of course there is—naturally enough—some truth in Signor Starace's statement that "Jews have in every nation formed—with their men and their means—the general staff of anti-fascism." The Vatican has been perfectly clear in its attitude on this question. The Holy Father has spoken with unusual vehemence of his abhorrence for racism and excessive nationalism, which is "contrary to the spirit of the Credo and is contrary to the Faith." Yet anti-Semitism increasingly threatens the internal peace and Christian spirit of nations. How to quarantine it, to prevent its spreading into countries at present little affected by it, is one of the recurrent problems of our troubled generation.

Vladimir—"Equal to the Apostles"

JULY 15 is, in the Russian Orthodox and the Ruthenian Greek Catholic calendars, the feast of Saint Vladimir the Great, Grand Duke of Kieff and All Russia and the "Constantine" of the East Slavs. He is, of course, a saint for Western Christians as well, but because of his largely local and national importance, no special feast is provided for him in the Roman calendar. Since the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar is still "old style," the celebration for the Orthodox of Vladimir's feast takes place on July 28, by our reckoning. This year happens to be the 950th anniversary of Saint Vladimir's conversion, and hence Russian Christians throughout the world are giving more than ordinary attention to the celebration. In this country special ceremonies attended by great numbers of people were held in New Jersey, New York, and San Francisco. There are many legends about Vladimir, of which a number are now known to have been fabricated in the course of the controversies between Orthodox and Catholics, and indeed there is little authentic information about this ancient ruler of southern Russia. Yet one thing can safely be said—that his conversion (his first study of Christianity arose from his desire to marry a Byzantine princess) was in many respects like Saint Augustine's, especially in its utter sincerity and in the complete change which it brought about in Vladimir's manner of life. Indeed its very sincerity supplied the firmest kind of foundation for the East Slav Christianity which was to follow it. The fact that, despite an immediate political occasion, there was no political motive in Vladimir's change of religion is something which might well offer encouragement to those who are distressed, today, at the problems involved in "political" Catholicism. And certainly it must please this great saint that the feast which is quite naturally celebrated by Russians should also be celebrated, in Rome and with a Slav rite, by the present General of the Jesuits, Father Wladimir Ledochowski, for his "name's day."

Twilight of the Press

By ERNEST A. DEWEY

NO NEWSPAPERMAN expects to write, in this lifetime, the requiem for his profession. Hateful is the thought of an existence barren of the noises of the newsroom, the clatter of linotypes, the thunder of the presses and the smell of ink. Even so, in quiet moments after an edition has gone to press, occasionally there pop up thoughts of disquieting uncertainty about the position of the press in the scheme of the not far distant future. That uncertainty is multiplied by many things: by the attitude of government in a state of flux toward the press; by the mushroom growth of radio, an industry which, in scarcely ten years, has grown to Gargantuan scale and made a place for itself partly by carving a huge hunk out of the journalistic carcass; and by other matters, most important of which is the change in the press itself.

Fifty, forty, even thirty years ago, the newspaper was a vital force in American life. Today it is as impersonal as an apartment-house trash-barrel, and its daily collection of fact and opinion no longer is adequate to the task of informing and holding together the mind of the modern community. With expansion in size and horizon the educative value of the press did not broaden. It merely spread itself thinner. Press-time no longer is an event but an incident. The journalistic voice has changed from a clarion call to a mixed-up voodoo mumbo-jumbo which glorifies the wisecrack rather than the clean-cut thought. Editorial opinion in this day sometimes attempts straight thinking and unbiased analysis of important issues but more often bemires itself in frothy argument pandering to one political group or another with no particular degree of sincerity behind it expected or accorded.

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In the Golden Age of American journalism—the days of the Greeleys, Danas, Wattersons and other journalistic titans whose fame has almost become fable—the American newspaper spoke with the voice of authority; it commanded respect; its influence was a potent compelling force; literally, it molded public opinion because it centered public attention. When the editor spoke the public listened. The "power of the press" was a thing real and tangible, for each paper expressed the individuality of its editor and its following numbered those who avowed his convictions gospel. This was an era of glory for the press.

Modern machinery brought in the golden age of income to the newspaper business. The newspaper increased in pages and its news and circulation horizons widened. Mechanics of the modern press required huge investments. From a personal journal the newspaper progressed to a repertorial medium as coldly impersonal as a doorknob. The places of responsibility upon its staff were taken by efficient business-getters who must govern its policies according to circulation figures and advertising lineage as flatly as any other business is governed by gross sales and net profits. The dewy-eyed sentimentalist and the flaming literary firebrand must needs become a columnist or quit. The editorial writer became a nonentity, a specialist in pap. The plants became mere newspaper factories more greatly concerned with private profit than with informing, educating and focusing the mass mind.

Popularity spelt big circulation, so good business indicated following and pandering to public opinion rather than leading it. The popular paper must please everybody and in striving for mass production the press voluntarily abandoned the fortress of its power. It surrendered the generalship of advancing thought to become a mirror of the mob. Its influence upon public opinion thereupon diminished as the newspaper increased in size. The Greeleys, Danas, Wattersons—voices of the individualized newspaper—were replaced by the "canned" opinionative columns of the Lippmanns, Thompsons, Winchells and McIntyres whose outputs are not an expression of the identity of any single journal but are broadcast by syndicates like tumbleweeds in the wind. The newspaper of today presents a polyglot of opinion; a review rather than a view.

The newspaper no longer monopolizes the public attention. Modern life has diffused and complicated that attention to such an extent that the modern newspaper finds its influence even less pressing than that of the corner movie or a fifteen-minute radio broadcast. It endeavors to compete with those mediums, yes. Through puzzles, contests, pictures and comics it invades the field of lowbrow entertainment, which it cannot hope to conquer. The newspaper can claim the interest of its reader only so long as it can entertain him or inform him upon a query he may have in his mind. A headline may snatch at his attention an instant longer but the story needs to be exciting to postpone the moment when the paper is discarded as merely a soiled fragment of that day's life.

The editor of THE COMMONWEAL once said that I was "frankly contemptuous of print" as an influence in modern American life. And why not? Experts who were paid to find out discovered that the average American spends less than four minutes time upon his daily paper. How much influence can we exert upon any individual in that time? How much information can we give upon matters that require thoughtfulness, how much prejudice can we overcome, how much public opinion can we mold in four minutes?

There is the tragedy of the newspaper. Print requires thought to digest it into opinion; it requires study to digest it into accurate opinion. It has never had great appeal to the crackpots who will not "waste" time getting into essentials but who skim the surface, gain the fragmentary incomplete view of an issue or a fact and rush off half-cocked to air a half-baked opinion. Modern life has become so complex that the American people believe they no longer have time to "go out and find a stump to sit down on and think things out." We believe we are so busy that we have only time for pre-digested foods, facts and opinions. And too often those who have the job of supplying these pre-digested facts and opinions are themselves too busy flea-hopping from one thing to another to qualify themselves upon the very facts they present and the opinions they are in such hurry to express.

This hurly-burly of haste is reflected in the American press to the extent that its influence has been lessened still more. Mental laziness has grown upon us until we pay less and less attention to print. In this we are abetted by the presence of radio to which we have only to listen without the effort of reading. Radio has pushed the press still further into the twilight by taking its place as a purveyor of news with greater immediacy, by exerting a more personal appeal to the emotions than is possible by means of print, and by taking a prodigious swipe at the advertising revenues of the press.

An editor friend of mine who is publisher of a large Midwestern newspaper is making a vigorous fight before the communications commission to acquire control of a radio station. When I asked him recently why he appeared so anxious to get into a competing business he replied: "I want that radio station for the same reason that the wise livery-stable proprietor of the early 1900's put a garage in the back end of his building."

How prophetic is his view, I wonder?

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Canada's Farm Policy

By FRANCIS FLAHERTY

IN THE long run the character of a people is influenced if not determined by the land upon which it lives. In older countries anthropologists have found evidences of a cause and effect relationship between the soil and the social and other characteristics of the people living upon it.

The Canadian prairies have been the home of white people for too short a time to influence the character of their inhabitants greatly, but a combination of man-made and natural factors there threatens to cause a serious change in the character of a large section of the Canadian population.

The prairie farm problem assumed serious proportions only in the past few years when it was brought to a state of crisis by a prolonged period of drought and a shorter period of disastrously low wheat prices. But even without these immediate causes there were fundamental defects in the agricultural economy of the three prairie provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which sooner or later would have demanded something after the fashion of the venture in economic planning which is now in progress.

As the problem presents itself at the moment, it is one of several hundred thousand people in once prosperous farming areas dependent for a livelihood on public relief. More than half the people in Saskatchewan received relief in some form during the past winter. Schools, churches, roads and community services of all kinds have deteriorated due to the inability of the people to pay taxes. Farm buildings and machinery have fallen more and more into disrepair and the land itself has become a prey to the winds which blow the surface soil off the fields and pile it in useless drifts.

Settlement on the Canadian prairies took place chiefly in the period from 1901 to 1921. During those twenty years the population of the three provinces increased from 420,000 to almost 2,000,000, the number of occupied farms from 55,000 to 250,000 and the area in crop from 3,600,000 to 32,300,000 acres.

It was a period of optimistic expansion. Settlers poured in from the United States, Eastern Canada, the British Isles and continental Europe. Among them were good, bad and indifferent farmers but on the whole they prospered. Credit was easy, land values rose and debts piled up.

Railways pushed across the plains and township after township, section after section of land clear across the country were allotted to farmers with little regard to the possibilities of their obtaining a living. So it was that as individual farmers according to their thrift and industry attained varying degrees of success in most districts, certain communities gradually became recognized as unsuccessful because of natural conditions.

Wheat growing was the chief agricultural pursuit and over large areas it was the only practicable one. Lack of water prevented the development of mixed farming and moreover wheat prices were good and most farmers were out for quick returns. But about 1930 prices took a sharp drop and simultaneously the country suffered the most severe drought in its history, a drought which continued with but one interruption down to the present.

Remedial measures took definite form in 1935 when the federal parliament enacted the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act and set up an organization which enlisted the cooperation of provincial governments, municipal councils, universities, farmers' organizations, railways, banks and loan companies.

"P.F.R.A.," as the organization was called, perhaps in imitation of certain alphabetical authorities in Washington, aimed at bringing about permanent improvements in farming practises and land utilization with a view to avoiding distress in future drought years. It seeks its object more by encouraging self-help among the farmers than by large public expenditures. It has nothing to do with relief. Its activities fall naturally into two branches, one having to do with economic research and planning leading to movements in population and a measure of public control over land use, and the other concerned with the promotion of certain physical works and cultural practises calculated to provide greater security for farmers on their land.

Soil surveys had been under way for many years and under the impetus of the crisis were speeded up, but it soon became clear that soil surveys were not enough unless they were linked with economic investigations.

In the economic survey, the first of its kind in Canada, data are being secured from farmers and municipal officers on the size of holdings, tenure, crop yields, livestock production and carrying capacity, farm receipts and expenses, indebtedness and farm abandonments. When this is analysed it will provide a basis for a permanent policy on land utilization for each locality on the prairies. Students and junior staff men from the three provincial universties do most of the field work and record their data on blank map sheets.

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Five land classes have been established for purposes of the survey: grazing, marginal for wheat growing, fair wheat land, good wheat land and excellent wheat land. All land which produces less than 339 bushels of wheat for sale annually from a quarter section (160 acres) is rated fit for grazing only. The marginal land produces on the average from 339 to 465 bushels annually. Despite the low yield, operation of some of this land in large farms is practictble. With three quarter sections in a farm, it could be expected to pay cash expenses, provide a modest living for a family, but it would leave nothing to meet interest charges.

Fair wheat land averages 466 to 720 bushels per quarter section, good wheat land from 721 to 900 bushels and excellent wheat land from 900 bushels up.

Results of the survey so far have brought out in bold relief the unsound settlement policies which directed misguided people to make their homes on land which should have been left to ranchers. In one block of seven municipalities 32 percent of the land fell into the grazing class, 24 percent into marginal, 37 percent into fair wheat land, 6 percent into good wheat land and less than 1 percent into excellent wheat land.

Within this area 85 percent of the land was occupied at the time of the survey. One-third of the unoccupied land had never been settled but the other two-thirds had once been farmed and abandoned. Some of it was abandoned almost as soon as it was settled but the greater part of the abandonments took place from 1930 on.

Often land classification brings private and community interests into conflict. Owners sometimes object to having their properties advertised as belonging to one of the lower classifications and at times a parcel of reasonably good land may be placed in one of the lower brackets, especially when it is entirely surrounded by poor lands which set the policy of utilization so far as the community is concerned.

To avoid such clashes as far as possible preliminary classifications are reported to the municipal councils and their advice sought in making whatever revisions may appear appropriate in the light of local conditions.

No disturbance of the owners of grazing or marginal lands is contemplated but where they fall into the public domain through abandonment or tax arrears they will be kept there. New settlers will not be permitted to locate on them even if they should wish to do so in the face of their established inferior character.

The first major application of the results of the survey has been the establishment of community pastures. These are simply large blocks of land unsuitable for farming, fenced and seeded to grass by the government and turned over to local associations of farmers living on better land nearby for grazing purposes. This gives the farmers a chance to add to their livestock production. They can utilize their farms for grain growing and have their cattle as a reserve of revenue in years of crop failure. As a further precaution against extreme drought, reserve pastures are being established. It has been found that grass in the dry prairie climate retains its food value over the winter. On the reserve areas no grazing will be permitted in normal years but in years when nothing grows cattle will be able to live on the dry grass of previous summers. So far 16 community pastures comprising 179,900 acres with a carrying capacity of 7,000 head of cattle have been established. They range in area from 5,000 to 25,000 acres. Some 40 others with a total area of 900,000 acres are projected.

Where the farmer's position can be improved by a change in cultural practises he is provided with advice and demonstrations of the correct procedure. More than 100 farm improvement associations have been formed through which the scientific agriculturalist can communicate his knowledge to the common dirt farmer.

In areas suffering from soil drifting, the associations have been effective in bringing about the adoption of strip farming, often on a community scale. If the land is tilled in strips laid out at right angles to the prevailing wind, soil drifting is lessened and often stopped. Alternate strips are seeded to crop and left fallow. Benefits of the method if applied to an individual farm are negatived where drifting starts on another farm and spreads. So the farmers through the associations agree upon community stripping.

Other approved methods of farming in dry areas are promoted through the associations. In areas where trees may be grown with some prospect of success, farmers are given seedlings and advice on the care and development of shelter belts.

Demonstration stations at strategic points show the farmers the results to be obtained by the application of methods developed on government experimental farms. Usually the stations are privately owned farms, operated by the owners under the supervision of officers from the experimental farms.

Ambitious large-scale irrigation systems for the Canadian prairies have been suggested but their cost and doubts as to their practicability from an engineering point of view have kept them from serious consideration by the dominion government, which would have to provide the money. The P.F.R.A. program includes both water conservation and irrigation works, but for the most part they are small projects on individual farms. The government provides advice and financial assistance and the farmers do the work themselves.

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Where water for livestock or domestic use is scarce in years of drought farmers are encouraged to construct dugouts. These are simply large pits excavated in convenient natural depressions which catch the runoff from the melting snow in the spring and hold it throughout the summer. Where small streams carry off the spring floods and go dry, stock watering dams are built to hold the water back for summer use. Such dams also make the irrigation of garden plots practicable and assure farmers a supply of home-produced food even in years of drought.

A few large irrigation projects ranging in cost from $1,000 to $300,000 have been undertaken directly by the government. They are designed to bring water to riverside lands which will be sold or leased in small parcels to residents of the areas in which they are located. On these parcels farmers owning higher and drier land will be able to produce hay for their stock and vegetables for domestic use.

This year's prospects for a crop are good over the drought area of the Canadian prairies. But even if this year's harvests should fail, as they have failed for the past few years, conditions will be better by reason of the rehabilitation measures. For instance last year much of the livestock had to be shipped out of the drought area for want of water. Enough water conservation works have already been completed to make that unnecessary again.

If crops are good the human side of the situation will undergo a sudden change for the better. Farmers will be off relief and will have a little money in their pockets even if it has to go on old debts. But with the bitter experiences of the past seven years stamped on the memory, the necessity of fortifying the country against future dry cycles is not likely to be overlooked. That involves an adjustment of human activities, in their relation to the land, to the long-range average productivity of the land.

"Megalopolitana"

By BARRY BYRNE

THE play of imagination which finds its outlet in a fabulous exaggeration of size, and preposterous magnificence of action, as in the modern tales of Paul Bunyan, has its counterpart in the stories of Hercules and other mythical giants. It is apparent also that our fifty-story buildings, the colossal wonders of our day, had their predecessors in the vainglorious monuments of Babylon, Egypt and Rome. Veneration of size is not peculiar to Americans alone, therefore, nor is it a worshipful attitude exclusively identified with this era. It does, however, typify a strong tendency in American life, which because of its dominance over the generality of affairs, and the substitution of its special type of romanticism for the realities of life, makes it portentous in the problems it creates.

The modern obsession with what Mr. Lewis Mumford calls "giantism" seems to have reached its maximum today in the material evidences of it that exist in colossal cities and in high buildings. The manifestations of this tendency of giantism are many and the modern city is but one of them. It is also unfortunately true that the standard of size is the basis of most valuations. The size of fortunes, of universities, of industrial plants, of advertising campaigns, of corporations, the height of buildings, population of cities, circulation of magazines, and similar enormous ventures impress us as important.

This veneration is by no means restricted to the unlettered; on the contrary it is as primary a consideration to the university president as it is to the day laborer; to the ecclesiastic as it is to the most humble of his flock. Much of this obsession with size represents an unchanneled expansiveness on the material plane, an expansiveness related both to an impressive vigor and to the unparalleled means for the expression of that vigor in buildings and institutions. It is an obsession that becomes more understandable when we see that we live in an era when spiritual and moral values have been subordinated to material success.

That this obsession continues, however, constitutes a menace to social betterment as well as to the spiritual and cultural advance. Cultural maturity is only possible with the existence of an adequate and normal sense of values. The norm of size does not furnish the groundwork for such a sense of values. On the contrary it distorts it and creates standards that falsify the relationship of spiritual effort to life. Both functional and spiritual reality are dwarfed by it to such an extent that it is with difficulty that these elements, which should be nurtured and brought to fruition, can be perceived in their clear identity.

The physical and social consequences of this giantism can be seen at their worst in the modern city, which epitomizes the destructive phases of all giantism, and the evils of this condition, which are apparent in all cities, reach their maximum in cities such as New York. The unreasonable density of population coupled as it is with a lack of economic security for a large portion of the

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population, gives rise to much of the inordinate desire for distraction which the tensity of city life creates as a complement to an unnatural type of living. Out of this density of population come high land values and out of high land values come the evil of high buildings, the overcrowding of land areas, the restriction of size of living accommodations, in order to create returns on inflated and fictitious land values, and finally the restriction of the size of the family in a fatal adjustment with financial insecurity and the restricted living quarters that are within the uncertain means of a wage-earning household.

The haphazard and uncontrolled plan development of such cities has augmented the evils inherent in a growth that was fostered in the interests of land speculation and which has been preserved in order to perpetuate the financial returns on an "unearned increment." Needless to say, the belated efforts at town planning and slum clearance, while recognizing the existence of evils that are apparent, are not accompanied by any reform either in the type of land tenure, from which most of the evils have arisen, or in adequate town planning on a social basis which would mitigate the evils. The town planning that has been attempted in this country for the major urban centers has been of two kinds.

One of these has had to do with the creation of highways for automotive traffic and the improvement of access between the different sections of the city. The Lake Shore development in Chicago and the opening of Ogden Avenue are examples of this type of improvement, while the current and sweeping changes of a similar kind in New York City, associated with the organizing force and executive achievements of Mr. Robert Moses, accompanied as these are with playground and park improvements, illustrate this type of town alteration and planning in its happiest phase. The other type of town planning, which is often integrated with this development of city avenues and parks, has to do with the effort to dress up the more conspicuous parts of a city by civic centers and arrangement of settings for governmental and quasi-governmental buildings.

It will be apparent that neither of these efforts at improvement relate to the average living district. The newly opened avenue, desirable as it is, parallels the slum. In fact, it is maintained with reason that the palatial avenue, as it increases land values, also inspires that intensified use of such high-priced land with high or crowded buildings that create a slum condition, even though in certain cases, it is a well-cared-for slum and adorned with awnings and doormen. As for the efforts to dress up the conspicuous parts of our cities, it suffices to say that the aim in such cases has been to reproduce a European type of metropolitan grandeur. In all such cases the debt to the plan of the city of Paris is a definite one. The results have usually been inadequate when they have not been actually ludicrous.

The folly of this last enthusiasm and effort, which has been concentrated on "front yard" improvements for the past thirty years, can be appreciated when we remember that all American cities have added tremendously to their area and population during that time. Yet these additions to the cities were permitted to grow in the same Topsy-like fashion as the older badly planned sections of the cities had grown. The evils of the existing plan were merely extended and this usually in untouched areas where nothing existed that would have prevented a correction of past mistakes. The inviolability of the existing block system, rigid, impractical and unlovely, was a fetish that confronted the few of us who, in the past, sought to break it into a more logical system of district planning in the city extensions. Walter Burley Griffin's studies in this field are, surprisingly, little known to American writers on town planning, yet his plan for Canberra, Australia, made by him while a resident of Chicago and in 1913, represents in its idea a genuine and logical innovation in the plan of a city.

The financial collapse of 1929 and the later efforts to stimulate recovery by promoting building construction work, advanced housing to the position of a major architectural interest. As housing entails the design of districts for such housing, the relationship to town planning becomes evident and it can be seen that housing is, in reality, an integrated detail of town planning. The literature on these and related subjects has been voluminous, varying from purely technical treatises on the engineering and architectural phases of town planning to those of a more particularized sociological type.

Of this last type two volumes have recently appeared. They are "Metropolis"[1] by Howard B. Woolston, Ph.D., and "Urban Sociology"[2] by E. E. Muntz. While both of these are written as texts to be used in conjunction with course work in sociology, that of Mr. Muntz is a more complete and better documented production. Contrasting with these two volumes, both of which are, very rightly, factual treatments of the subject and quite unadorned, is Mr. Lewis Mumford's new book "The Culture of Cities."[3] While this book parallels the material that is covered by these other writers, Mr. Mumford's book is more definitely a literary production and attempts

[1] *Metropolis: A Study of Urban Communities, by Howard B. Woolston. New York: D. Appleton-Century.* $2.75.

[2] *Urban Sociology, by E. E. Muntz. New York: The Macmillan Company.* $3.75.

[3] *The Culture of Cities, by Lewis Mumford. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.* $5.00.

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the herculean task of assembling a heteogeneous mass of matter into an artistic, literary total.

In Mr. Mumford's former books, as well as in his conferences, he has strongly advocated an indigenous architecture integrated in a a planned community. This new volume is a further contribution to that end. The book, in its plan, is a comprehensive one, starting as it does with a historical study of the development of the modern city from its medieval sources. The bibliography is extensive and is, in part, supplemented by comment, which is a stimulating device. It is copiously illustrated.

That Mr. Mumford's book would be an expression of genuine humanitarianism and his ideas stimulating and expressed with a happy facility is only what his past performances would lead one to expect. That his ideas are not always well related, and lack complete unity, may be considered in the way of incidental comment. The framework of the book is so large and the field it covers so broad that such complete unity could hardly be expected in it. Its unquestioned value can best be utilized by the exercise of selective judgment, and the valid factual and generalized matter separated from the occasional lapses which betoken that confusion of the modern liberal mind which hovers uncertainly between a professed democracy and the emerging phase of Fascist-Marxism.

As is the case with most writers of the moment who treat of architecture there is a predilection for "functionalism." Both as a basis and as a critical test in architecture, and in the related field of town planning, this is as healthy as the same test is when applied to the activities, or customs, of society. It implies the examination of processes in the light of the use for which they were developed and it upholds the norm of naturalism as contrasted with an arbitrary unnaturalism. As Mr. Mumford's devotion to this critical formula is entire, it is difficult to understand his reasoning in his emphasis on, and approval of, an objective type of eroticism and of the use of contraceptives, a theme which is recurrent in this book. It must be questioned whether a "functionalist" who advocates an objective eroticism can be said to have a full grasp of the implications of his mutually discordant beliefs. As he speaks of a "vigorous eroticism" as one of the desirable developments of this age, it may be pointed out that widespread, objective eroticism has usually accompanied the decay of a society or state.

Mr. Mumford's attractive and colorful literary style which promotes the readability of this book, in which the subject-matter is largely technical, is also something of a danger to its acceptance at its real value, at least to the degree that the felicity of style impresses one as being an end rather than a means. This marked felicity of writing is occasionally allied with a lack of exactitude in a way that tends to cast unwarranted disrepute on other and quite authentic portions. In view of the scope of the book and its value such a lack of exactitude in portions of it is unfortunate. It exists, principally, in the accompanying historical matter which is such as an author might use to enrich his main theme, and, if possible, throw added light on it.

Particular instances are the references to "indulgences" and "blessings" which indicate the author's assumption that these words are the same in meaning; the use of the word "relics" when what is meant is church statuary and like articles of devotion; reference to the Renaissance "discovery of Plato and Vitruvius." In this last instance it is correct to speak of Vitruvius as a discovery of that period but as Plato was not an unknown philosopher throughout the Dark and Middle Ages, the use of the word "discovery" raises this question of literary exactness. A similar case is the statement that "belief in witchcraft . . . was given the final sanction of the Church in 1484." While Mr. Mumford does not say so, we may suppose this is a reference to the Bull "Summis desiderantes affectibus" of Innocent VIII and of that year, which ratified powers given to certain inquisitors to investigate charges of heresy and witchcraft. "Final sanction" would imply a belief that the Bull promulgated a doctrine of witchcraft, which, of course, would be an absurdity and is probably not what Mr. Mumford actually meant.

Again on page 130, referring to the gilt and plaster of rococo churches, he speaks of them as "materializations of the vulgar dream of Saint John of Patmos." Esthetically viewed the Apocalypse may vary in its appeal to different persons, but "vulgar" is not a word that can be said to describe it.

There is also, in the portions dealing with current developments a tendency to confuse conspicuousness with importance, which is a tribute we are all apt to pay to that giantism which we decry. It is underlining a truism to point out that conspicuousness — and giantism — whether in buildings, empires or totalitarian states, as well as in current personalities, are weedy growths and quite likely will wither with some of the rapidity of their appearance. This is a view I am certain Mr. Mumford shares and which enables him to exercise discrimination in most of his book. He makes an apt use of the word "enterprisers" to designate those who profit, by reason of brokerage ability, on the originality and creations of others. The application of the test implied in this word "enterprisers" to current reputations, achievements and movements would have increased the critical value of the book in parts where it deals with current matters.

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The Mexican Crisis

By RANDALL POND

SINCE March 18, the day on which President Lázaro Cárdenas read his decree confiscating the properties of foreign oil companies, Mexico has seldom been out of the headlines. Scarcely two months after the confiscation, the government marched against General Saturnino Cedillo and scattered his agrarian troops from one end of San Luís Potosí to the other. While the President was engaged in directing the troops in San Luís, Governor Manero of Tabasco showed his peculiar interpretation of the Cárdenas idea of democracy by ordering his police to fire upon a defenseless crowd of women, children and peasants, who had gathered in Villahermosa to plead for freedom of worship.

But it isn't oil alone nor Cedillo alone nor the religious question alone which help give title to this article. For behind the sensational problems which beset the Mexican President, there are others which are deeper, graver, than any of the three mentioned here. Agrarian affairs are in bad shape; the financial situation is causing much head-wagging; and foreign trade must be so adjusted as to give a decent living to importers and exporters without weakening the country through the flight of foreign capital.

There is not much use in recapitulating all that has been said or done on the oil question. Any American who has even the slightest knowledge concerning the methods of oil companies in his own country can well imagine what a so-called "backward nation" must suffer when one of the world's most powerful trusts brings its full strength to bear on the acquisition of "black gold."

The stories are being printed now. People who were long silent or who, if they spoke, were unable to find justice, are telling of men and women who were drugged or made drunk or slain because they held properties rich in potential oil wells. Figures have been published, showing the millions of barrels of oil which were exported without a cent of taxes being paid on them. If even a small minority of such stories be true (and many are backed by legal documentation) it is difficult to understand how the companies can honestly claim to have any indemnity whatsoever coming to them!

Looking the facts in the face, Mexico had a right to expropriate. Looking a bit further, it is true that Cárdenas chose an unpropitious time. But his hand was forced. The companies would not accept the judgment of the board of arbitration; they ignored the verdict of the Supreme Court. And then, after such arrogance, they ate humble pie at the eleventh hour and agreed to give the workers all they had asked for! Is it any wonder that, in every section of Mexican life, indignation mixed with patriotism swelled up and boiled over at such actions?

And make no mistake about it. The Mexicans have not displayed such unanimity of purpose since the French invasion of 1862. For the first time since he came into power, Cárdenas has been able to count with the kind of enthusiastic approval which helped Madero overthrow Don Porfirio Díaz a quarter of a century ago.

Can Mexico sell the oil she has recovered? She must. In the beginning the pseudo-radicals, whipped up by men like Lombardo Toledano, attempted to tie the president's hands by stipulating that "no Mexican crude oil shall be sold to the Fascist dictatorships, Italy, Germany and Japan." Within a few weeks it became apparent that the hostile attitude of England plus the depression in the United States, had cut off Mexico's most important markets. Therefore, the Senate very sensibly decreed that the President was free to sell the oil wherever he could—and it is now reported that Mr. Davis of New York, who is supposed to be under contract to take 20,000,000 barrels this year, will reship much of it to Hamburg.

Mexicans have been pleased with the attitude of the United States, though the cancellation of the silver purchase plan caused many uncomplimentary things to be said. Yet there is the feeling that Roosevelt and Hull have not betrayed the "good neighbor" policy in the face of the most severe threat to which it has yet been subjected. In contrast, England has behaved in so undiplomatic a fashion, especially with regard to her note casting aspersions on Mexico's ability to pay her debts, that the world must have chuckled when the Mexican foreign office pointed out that "even bigger and richer nations than Mexico are not always punctilious about paying their debts."

Aside from the oil question, the Cedillo "rebellion" has captured the most headlines, especially in those papers who would like to see Cárdenas lose out because of his audacious treatment of the oil companies. What are the facts? For years, Cedillo was allowed to run the state of San Luís Potosí as his personal fief. Calles and Obregon let him strictly alone; he even aided the former against the Cristeros in 1927-29. The evidence is strongly in favor of the following hypothesis concerning Cedillo.

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Cedillo had presidential ambitions, crude though he was. As long as he controlled thousands of armed agrarians, he would have to be pushed aside before 1940. He added airplanes to his equipment and his resignation as Secretary of Agriculture, following upon student agitation supported by his leftist enemies, left him in the position of a discontented Achilles.

We are told that he planned his revolt for May. What we know is that in the middle of that month, President Cárdenas went to San Luís Potosí, capital of the state of that name, and said he knew Cedillo was planning a revolt. He invited him to surrender, offered him and his men full pardon and a chance to return to their work.

Celillo took to the hills. His men surrendered in droves. His arms and ammunition, his planes and his properties, were invaded and occupied by federal troops. Now, I ask, if he was ready for revolt, where was his "plan," his "pronunciamento" without which no Mexican rebel ever begins a movement? It may be true, I really do believe, that Cedillo planned a revolt at some time. I think, and it will take the future to prove it, that Cárdenas beat him to the punch.

Don't believe that guff about Germany, Italy and Japan having a finger in the Cedillo pie. No Mexican or Latin American general has to go to the new dictators to learn how to start a revolution, as President Vargas of Brazil proved so recently. Those interests in the United States who are intent on attacking Fascism without ever mentioning the Moscow "democracy" except to praise it, are in for a rude awakening.

The Villahermosa incident is a direct result of the long reign of Garrido Canabal, boasted "scourge of Tabasco." The present governor, Manero, has refused to allow the people to return to the acts of worship which they were supposed to have had beaten out of them during the bloody days of Canabal's rule. More than 18,000 had gathered in Villahermosa by May 29. They rebuilt one of the churches that Garrido's men had destroyed and they continued to ask for the right of worship guaranteed by the Constitution.

A campaign for governor of the state is on and Manero's man, Trujillo, looks to be in for a beating. His opponent, Senator Colorado, had to be discredited. Therefore the Catholics were accused of agitating and of creating disorders. The federal troops in Villahermosa were able to keep order, but on May 29 a clash occurred between Catholics and a few radicals who have attempted to keep alive the spirit of their exiled master, Canabal. Local police, egged on by the governor, interfered, firing into the mass of helpless men, women and children, killing two men, a woman and a child, and injuring many others.

At once the Mexican press, to its credit, spoke out in strong language against the governor who was spilling innocent blood while President Cárdenas was showing himself magnanimous enough to forgive even rebels. Catholics from all parts of the country bombarded government offices with telegrams. The Secretary of the Interior, García Tellez, made public a telegram which his department had dispatched to the Tabascan authorities on May 12, seventeen days before the shootings. In it they were told to do everything in their power to adjust matters with the Catholics, since the government respected the principle of religious freedom. At the same time, the Catholics were asked to do nothing to endanger peace.

As this is written, President Cárdenas has not yet made a statement concerning the Tabascan outrage. Still, in view of the cooperation which Catholic authorities have lent in the country's efforts to collect funds to pay the oil debt, and in view of the many conciliatory messages the President has delivered of late, it is hoped that he will further solidify Catholic support by rebuking Governor Manero, demanding the punishment of the assassins, and granting the Catholics of Tabasco their constitutional rights.

Financially speaking, Mexico is at sea. The peso began to slide the day of the oil expropriations and has continued to bounce up and down ever since. Its highest since March 18 has been around 4.30 to the dollar, its lowest about 4.80, from its stabilized point of 3.60 previous to the expropriation. The high tariffs inaugurated in March hurt imports badly and taxes did a nose dive, as did customs duties.

The gravity of the agrarian situation can be best judged by the President's comments, made during the months of May and June. He has appealed to small proprietors to increase their crops; he has told how sad he was to see large areas left without corn, wheat or other important cereals planted on them. And the government has been forced to import both corn and wheat in an effort to keep down prices so that the masses of people will not starve.

Yes, Mexico is facing a crisis; but she is strong enough to meet it, whip it, smash it, force herself back to the road of prosperity if Cárdenas can continue in the rôle of statesman which events have forced him to assume. He was brave in defeating Calles; he was courageous in facing the oil companies; he was magnanimous beyond all criticism in his treatment of the Cedillistas. Now he must go beyond those exhibitions. He must shake off the false hand of demagogic labor leaders; he must work hard to cement better relations between workers and employers; he must continue to allow the Church the freedom the people ask for it. If he can do all these things, Cárdenas can easily make a place for himself on the pedestal whereon the people have placed Francisco I. Madero, their martyred hero of 1910.

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Communications

PLAINT OF A CATHOLIC MOTHER

Tucson, Ariz.

TO the Editors: I have just finished reading an article in your issue of July 15, the "Plaint of a Catholic Mother." I found it interesting and it occurred to me that I could suggest a few thoughts which might afford some consolation to the young Catholic mother bent on doing her duty to God. Howsoever much one may sympathize with her in the plight that is hers, she must be convinced that pagan principles are rampant in the world today and that, for her courage, she must look to the Catholic Church, her real mother.

The Catholic Church is the only institution that is unafraid to tell women what their duties are against contraceptive measures. She has this courage because her doctrine is a revelation of God's mind to the mind of man. The young Catholic mother writes of those who fall by the wayside during the "unsafe" periods, but who "wait presumptuously for [the] safe middle years to return to the table of the Lord." For her consolation, let me assure her that those "safe" middle years never come and that, if they do, courage to correspond does not return with them. A woman reaps what she sows. This holds in the natural and the supernatural order. As she lives, so will she die. Her destiny in eternity is going to be exactly the one that she is weaving for herself by her daily acts in life. Truly then it is presumptuous to wait for either—the years or the grace. We know of only one authentic case in history where this miracle of salvation was performed.

I am looking now at a certain chair in my study. Not so long ago a woman sat in that chair. She was fast approaching the "safe" middle years. I argued with her to change her life and not to wait for those years. She knew better than I did. She pleaded like an actress that Christ's Church should change, that she should begin to call that good which is evil, that the safe middle years would find her back again at the Communion rail. A few short weeks after that eventful day, one evening she went out into the patio to dispose of the dish water. She never came back. Her husband found her lying dead. She never quite reached the "safe" middle years. She never returned to the table of Our Lord. There is a law which knows no exception—a woman will reap what she sows. So may God give the young Catholic woman grace to be always a true exponent of what she believes, mothers-in-law or "good" Catholics to the contrary. The ex-champion of the faith never comes back after middle life.

† DANIEL J. GERCKE,
Bishop of Tucson.

Baltimore, Md.

TO the Editors: By publishing the "Plaint of a Catholic Mother" you have rendered a service of outstanding merit to the martyrs of today, the noble husbands and wives who, with admirable courage, continue to obey God's law at the cost of great personal sacrifice. . . . God bless that brave mother!

But I am surprised that Father John Monaghan has not consulted his files of the Catholic papers, and especially THE COMMONWEAL of a year ago, to find that there is "a concerted effort made to save this natural right by abolishing these economic ills." In your issue of June 25, 1937, page 234, in an article by Father Edgar Schmiedeler the details of a concerted effort were made known which the National Catholic Women's Union has been making for several years with considerable success to establish Catholic maternity guilds. "That's Something Practical" is the title of that article. As a member of the N. C. W. U., I invite that good mother and Father Monaghan to consider the possibilities of the Catholic maternity guild as a partial solution of this economic and moral problem. . . .

MARY A. COAKLEY.

A REVOLUTION DOESN'T COME OFF

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: A slight correction ought to be made to the impression created by Harry Sylvester's recent very informative article on the Mexican situation.

Had Mr. Sylvester investigated the motives and overt actions of Vincente Lombardo Toledano on his recent tour of Europe and America as keenly as he apparently looked into the attempted Cedillo revolt, he would have discovered that Toledano, far from being anything like an exile from Mexico, was in fact a most eloquent defender of the Cárdenas régime. Mr. Toledano's trip was more than a personal tour; it was made for the express purpose of winning the friendship of other peoples for the present Mexican government. If Harry Sylvester has since taken the trouble to hear Toledano's speech given on June 24 at the Royal Windsor Hotel in New York, he no doubt has corrected his impression of the whys and wherefores of Toledano's "exile" from Mexico. In fact, he would have heard at that time that Toledano was shortly to return to Mexico and play a leading part in the formation of a Latin-American confederation of labor, for the purpose not only of uniting Latin-American labor unions, but also of winning friends in other Latin-American countries for the Cárdenas régime.

At this writing Toledano is back in Mexico, a fact which makes appear rather foolish the following statement in Harry Sylvester's article: "Lombardo Toledano, most powerful communist leader in Mexico, recently left to go abroad. I would not be surprised but that he stayed there quite a while. Not exile, of course. Just an unusually long visit."

I am in no position to be certain, but I question very strongly Mr. Sylvester's claim that Toledano is a communist; for Toledano has on more than one occasion been extremely critical of communist tactics within the Mexican Confederation of Workers. He makes no attempt to keep communists out of that labor organization; and in fact cooperates with them whenever there are mutual

Michael Williams is taking a short vacation, and so his column, VIEWS AND REVIEWS, which usually occupies this space, is suspended for two weeks.

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objectives to obtain; but there seems to be no evidence that Toledano himself is a communist. Having shown Mr. Sylvester way off the track on one point concerning Toledano, I should like to have proof of his second point. I am not so sure that Toledano would have any objection to social reforms brought about by the actual application of the teachings of the Church.

LILLIAN ARNOLD.

DECENTRALIZED CITY HOMESTEADS

Oshkosh, Wis.

TO the Editors: One of the best and most suggestive articles published in THE COMMONWEAL in many weeks, relating to homes for the low income part of our population, is "Decentralized Homesteads" by Mr. George Weller in your issue of June 22. Its chief merit lies in the plan or plans to develop private home ownership, as contrasted with permanent tenancy. . . .

The outline of the work of Mr. Ralph Borsodi is most usefully suggestive; namely for a sufficient number of people to organize a cooperative, buy a large tract of land at wholesale, plat it into parcels of one or two acres, build homes cooperatively, raise much of their food supplies, and commute to their industrial pursuits in the city.

Three "mountainous" obstacles are offered to this plan. (1) The speculative price of suitable land. This can be largely overcome by remitting the taxes upon the new buildings for a term, say ten or twenty years, and increasing the tax upon the land, and upon all surrounding land. This would take the tax out of unearned ground rent, and not from the labor-produced buildings, and would of course require enabling legislation. (2) The usurious cost of financing buildings. This can be overcome by government assistance to a limited extent, and at a rate low enough to induce banks, trust and insurance companies to loan money at rates that cannot be called usurious. (3) The high costs of construction can be met at least in part by having some suitable builders and mechanics included in the cooperative who would be furnished year around work, income and livelihood, and a home on like terms with the others. Building construction is now carried on the year round.

After all the chief problem is cheap and good land. Since land tax all comes out of ground rent, which is unearned; and since only net ground rent determines the market value of land, the problem of the price of land is as simple as pointing out the facts to the legislature.

JOHN HARRINGTON.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PADRES

Los Angeles, Calif.

TO the Editors: "James L. Duff is a California lawyer."—THE COMMONWEAL.

"You may charge me with murder, or want of sense—
We are all of us weak at times—
But the slightest attempt at a false pretence
Was never among my crimes."—*Lewis Carroll.*

Within the law—but not the bar!

JAMES L. DUFF,
Broker in Coffee.

The Screen

Crime and Sentiment

PERHAPS I'm wrong, but I always thought the Hollywood producers had a code that prohibited the showing of how a criminal actually does his stuff. In "The Amazing Dr. Clitterhouse" you get the works—how to do a robbery, how to meet a "fence," how to dispose of the jewels through the "fence," how to commit the perfect crime, and how to get rid of someone who's in your way by the adroit use of poisons—all with lectures and illustrations by Edward G. Robinson. However, in this picture it's all done in the interest of science. You soon discover that Mr. Robinson, who plays the title rôle, is taking notes on what he and his pals are doing, and he plans to write a thesis on the medical reasons for changes in a criminal's life. Except for the fine acting by Cedric Hardwicke, Barre Lyndon's original play, on which this picture is based, was pretty much ado about nothing. This cannot be said about the movie, for it turns out to be a really exciting melodrama with well sustained suspense and several excellent photographic shots. Mr. Robinson, as the "professor" who is going to astound his profession with his studies in criminology, and Claire Trevor, as the "fence," get the most out of their parts; and Humphrey Bogart, as "Rocks" Valentine, de guy who leads de gang, proves again he is the toughest of tough guys.

Humphrey Bogart gets another chance to exhibit the progress of his crime career in "Racket Busters." This time it is as Martin, the leader of the racketeers who are organizing the truck drivers, that he realizes New York's seven million people "all gotta eat" and he plans to make the whole town pay off. However, he meets some first-class opposition in Walter Abel, the special prosecutor appointed to bust the rackets, and in George Brent, Allen Jenkins and a group of truck drivers and food commissioners who dan't want to play Bogart's kind of ball. Lloyd Bacon's good direction, some excellent photography, the well staged fights in the Washington Market, the repeated portrayal of fear on the parts of the truck drivers and their wives, the earnest struggle by the prosecutor to get the cowed victims of the racketeers to expose Martin and his gang make "Racket Busters" memorable.

And then, swinging to the opposite type of entertainment, you get sentiment and sweetness in "Mother Carey's Chickens," based on the novel by Kate Douglas Wiggin (she of cabbage patch fame). Prepare yourself for much fluttering of family around a mother, four children kissing papa farewell when he leaves for the Spanish-American War, death, poverty, sickness, the young school teacher falling in love with the wrong sisters and the heart-broken sister quickly recovering when the young doctor comes along. Anne Shirley and Ruby Keeler are the sisters; Fay Bainter is the mother. You get a bit doubtful about the Careys' real lack of funds as you see beautiful bouquets of flowers, fresh crisp dresses and polished finger nails. But the kids will love this picture and never even wonder where the money comes from. PHILIP HARTUNG.

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Books of the Day

Two on Spain

The Martyrdom of Spain, by Alfred Mendizabal. Preface by Jacques Maritain. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00.

TWO DISTINCT, if related, analyses, contrasting in vantage point and tone, but indicating the same general conclusion, comprise this modest volume. The bulk of it is a strictly political history, from the departure of the last Alphonso till the revolt of the generals two years ago, by a professor of the philosophy of law at the University of Oviedo who also serves as secretary of the Spanish group of the Catholic Union of International Studies. He writes with extraordinary objectivity for a sensitive man who has lived through so much turmoil in the past fifteen years. He was at the mercy of the Asturias terror which destroyed at the University of Oviedo the professional writings he had been composing for eight years.

To Americans nurtured in the socio-economic school of history, Señor Mendizabal presents enough of the activities and aspirations of the various political parties to show that in Spain, at least, such parties have exercised a dynamic influence on the course of history. He gives a clue at the outset with the remark, "The Spaniard always has in mind what he does not want and only the vaguest idea what he is seeking." Another clue to the whole pre-war period comes in the observation on the effects of the Popular Front electoral victory in February, 1936: "The Left did not know how to win. The Right did not know how to lose."

Spain had her opportunity in 1931, according to Professor Mendizabal, when the republic succeeded eight years of increasingly unpopular dictatorship, but the leaders of the chief political groups sought to maneuver the situation to further their own particularist programs. Socialists, Communists and Anarcho-Syndicalists sought to hasten the advent of their specific brands of class rule, while Rightist leaders concealed their efforts to restore the *status quo ante* behind republican sentiments.

The republic was, therefore, doomed from its earliest days. And when the Communist-inspired Anarchist miners seized Oviedo for nine bloody days in 1934, the Rightists wreaked vindictive vengeance on the participants once order had been restored. This was an irreparable blow to Spanish unity. Again after the 1936 elections, which the Popular Front won from the Right and the Center, despite an inferior popular vote, the extremists betrayed their country—the government by countenancing if not encouraging anti-religious atrocities and failing in its duty of maintaining public order, the Rightists by provoking street fighting and by building up private armies.

All this, in Professor Mendizabal's opinion, the crimes and injustices, the acts and omissions indirectly responsible for the Spanish Civil War, is not to be compared with the terrible crime of actually unleashing the tragic civil conflict, which has afflicted such multitudes of human beings and perhaps obliterated Spain for several generations.

Even so, Jacques Maritain's moving Preface presents a sharp contrast to the major portion of the work. To begin with, M. Maritain is conscious that he is a foreigner who has no business "to take sides in this civil war: he has not sufficient information to guide him or direct experience of the matter, or any of the other needed qualifications. We must stigmatize as highly unbecoming the way in which party passions have in every country exploited the Spanish tragedy in order everywhere to raise the level of hate."

Maritain, however, does discuss with his usual penetration and zeal the problem of modern warfare in the light of Christian principles. And the evidence that he does have of the human disasters of the war strikes him to the heart. In contrast with Señor Mendizabal's calm discussion, Maritain expresses his convictions in the anguished tones of one who hungers and thirsts after justice for a people which is undergoing a holocaust of tragic proportions. He has been working unceasingly to bring peace to Spain and the friends on both sides he so deeply loves.

Both discussions are documented through statements of Spanish political leaders, the Spanish hierarchy and the Holy Father. The intelligence, loyalty, integrity and Christian zeal of both authors are manifest in their forthright treatment of this difficult problem. "The Martyrdom of Spain" is far and away the most important book that has yet appeared in English on the tragic Spanish Civil War. EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

Catalonia Infelix, by Allison Peers. New York: Oxford University Press. $3.00.

THIS compendious volume has appeared at a strategic moment, when the question of regional autonomy in Spain is being brought into relief by the military isolation of the Catalan province from the rest of "Loyalist" Spain. The author has very well emphasized and even pleaded a distinct Catalonian nationalism and thus placed in the foreground an important element of the present conflict, which has been largely ignored in the oversimplified division of Spaniards into "Rights" and "Lefts." In the solution which follows military victory, the old question of Centralism versus Federalism is bound to assume a major importance.

Allison Peers is frankly a Catalonia-phile. He works with a definite thesis, bringing to his aid historical developments, liguistic differences, and even romantic feeling, to prove that downtrodden Catalonia may be close kin to the Spain of Old Castile, to which and by which it has been chained, but is certainly not identical with it. And the tragedy, as he conceives it, is that, finally on the threshold of attaining its liberation from a centralist Madrid, Catalonia the Unhappy is apparently now doomed to the loss of its gains made under the republic. If it were within the province of the book reviewer to make a prophecy, however, one might be tempted to suggest that the final settlement of the war may come through mediation with this same "unhappy" state, and that the Catalan province may yet receive at least a measure of that independence it so ardently desires. A reasonable recognition of regional claims should not mean a return to that invertibration of Spain of which Ortega y Gasset writes in "The Revolt of the Masses."

Almost encyclopedic in character, ranging from political evolutions to summaries of the literature and arts of the province, this is not an easy book to read through. But it is definitely a volume that should be within the grasp of everyone who wishes to understand the Catalonian, or for that matter the Spanish, question. An excellent bibliography is appended for the student who wishes to make an exhaustive study. JAMES A. MAGNER.

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HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

The Founding of American Civilization: The Middle Colonies, by Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00.

A STUDY from Dr. Wertenbaker's pen is always interesting, valuable for the student and sound in its interpretation for the general reader who would know something about his own country, whose history studied in its origins and fulness is decidedly the most important history for Americans. And it requires just as much erudition to write it. With these observations a careful reader of the volume at hand will agree. Social historians who are concerned with the transit of civilization and American cultural developments from Old World immigrant centers will find not a new interpretation but a stimulating reaction from navigation acts, politics and trade. There is a distinct contribution; this is not merely another account of the Middle Colonies nor a rehash of what every college sophomore has gleaned from a respectable survey course in general American history.

A new people developed in America, and a mighty different people is now developing in a country where, in 1930, a third of the population was foreign born or had at least one parent who crossed the seas in a steerage ship. It is not strange that some of the old self-reliant individualism is not so pronounced, that Americans will accept relief, orders, and "isms." As Professor Wertenbaker sees the old America, it had more than an English origin, as refugee arrivals came from diverse parts of the Continent bringing their languages, cultures, religions, prejudices and inheritances. The student who would trace their activities must know of Dublin and Belfast, of the schoolmen of Glasgow, of Huguenots, of German peasants, of Hollanders, and of Swedes. He must know of priests, parsons and presbyters. He must realize that the structure of America "was reared by the poor and the downtrodden of Europe"; that few were the men of good names that came here, but that here good names were made by the sons of servants, laborers, peasants and deserters from foreign ships and regiments. Unfortunately, racial histories are not as scientific and judicial as they are emotional and zealous, so that a good deal of secondary material upon which the author had to depend is a bit doubtful. Once I ran across an item in a supposedly sound history that told of the Scotch-Irish as founders of the Catholic University of America.

However, the author manages well enough. He displays Old Netherlands to his reader before New Amsterdam and shows the marks of the old land upon the new—and especially in houses, barns, meeting-places, streets, ships, bricks, and in the way of doing things. It is an interesting approach, and one made clear by contrasts and pictures. Then the Dutch, the Anglicans and the Yankees meet in New York and on Long Island, and there is a merger of men and institutions. In Jersey, again, there is a coming from described places of Englishmen, Dutchmen, New Englanders and Scotch-Irishmen. And when these Calvinists met, churches split asunder but democracy was given an impetus. But above all in Pennsylvania and its three Lower Counties, races, creeds and men met and influenced each other in their beliefs, languages, living conditions, inventions, bridges, architecture, shipping, education and aristocratic climbings.

In this volume there is little about the Irish people, but this is understandable for their number was comparatively small in the eighteenth century and their contribution somewhat indistinct. Nor has their story been written in a fashion which will command the attention of serious students who are challenged by no marked racial sympathy but possibly rather repelled by a certain lack of disinterest, even though it be unconscious.

RICHARD J. PURCELL.

With the Red Cross in Europe, 1917-1922, by Ernest P. Bicknell. Washington: American National Red Cross. $1.50.

COLONEL ERNEST P. BICKNELL saw the World War and its aftermath from the vantage point of a Red Cross official of high rank. As such, though technically subject to military discipline like all civilians accompanying armies, he could actually go about any place and talk to almost anyone in terms of practical equality. He thus occupied a ringside seat, opera box, or whatever you choose to call it, during some of the most stupendous events in history. Particularly during the months immediately after the war, when so many others were tied to definite posts, he was in a position to get about the shell-shocked Continent and see exactly what went on. Furthermore, he was not the representative of a government but of a disinterested yet vastly powerful organization with some highly tangible benefits to bestow. There were, naturally, few to stand in his way.

Colonel Bicknell originally contemplated three books on his experiences. The first, "Pioneering with the Red Cross," he lived to finish. The second, "In War's Wake," was nearly complete at his death. The present volume, more or less a left-over, existed only as notes, diaries and letters, and as scattered data in the Red Cross files. These had to be put together by other hands, and "With the Red Cross in Europe" is therefore a rambling, scrambling volume of no great literary merit, sometimes badly padded, but always redeemed by the information it contains and the vivid human sidelights that it throws on the closing years of war and the first years of "peace."

The adventures of the Red Cross workers were nearly as thrilling as those of the fighting men. One plucky American nurse hung on to the top of a freight car for 150 miles, carrying the only medicine that could stop an epidemic. In Narva, Red Cross workers risked their lives to scrub and disinfect a typhus hospital, and in six days brought the death-rate down from 8 percent to ½ of 1 percent. Others brought 780 abandoned Russian children from Vladivostok to the Baltic, while the Soviet representative in America vigorously condemned them! In 1922, the Red Cross was still dealing with 471 child health centers throughout Europe, and no worker knew when he might become suddenly responsible for hundreds of helpless people.

The difficulties encountered were sometimes odd. Five thousand gold-rimmed Red Cross buttons were sent to Switzerland. Unfortunately the gold was just a shade under fourteen karat. Swiss bumbledom promptly destroyed the buttons and then tried to fine the Red Cross $500 for shipping falsely graded jewelry. D'Annunzio's ephemeral government at Fiume blandly requested supplies but asked to have no Red Cross men sent along. The grateful populace was likely to beat them up! Fuel shortage was so bad that at one time a fifty-car train of urgent relief supplies "stood, all coupled up and ready to proceed at any moment, for three weeks before enough coal could be obtained to move it." This is matched by the "diplomatic train" which ran out of fuel in the middle

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of Croatia, and stood there while the stalled statesmen scrambled around for enough wood to fire the boiler.

One anecdote, trivial though it is, is worth reporting. Creosote, as everybody knows, preserves wood almost indefinitely. Consequently, when American GHQ ordered creosoted horse-troughs sent overseas, numerous busybodies sagely whispered that General Pershing anticipated a long war. The truth was finally disclosed: Army nags chewed up their troughs. The nasty taste of creosote discouraged them.

Too much of the material included is trivial without being amusing. The author is impressed because Europeans are good linguists; because they wall their gardens in; because a priest likes his new cassock. Much of his comment is tourist tittle-tattle, suitable only to a picture postcard. Careful editing would have cut out all of this, which was probably never intended for publication and which is certainly not worth it. The result would have been a smaller and better book. JOHN BAKELESS.

MEMOIRS

My Mind a Kingdom, by George Thomas. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

"I HAVE not found life a great adventure, but mostly an unbearable trial, and the only thing I know for certain is that I have to go on." The author of this diary is a young man crippled, like three other members of his family, with progressive muscular atrophy. He is not given to morbid self-pity nor to shallow optimism. His is the quiet heroism without heroics which accepts the difficult life of the London slums, the ever-recurring illness and accidents in the family, his "own slow disintegration." Here is an amazingly simple and direct account of one year of life in the Thomas home, of an existence which hovers always perilously between tragedy and comedy.

The author does not attempt to idealize the commonplace. With refreshing brotherly frankness he complains of the selfishness of young Alfie or the difficulties of collaborating with Ada in revision of the manuscript of his novel. Yet he appreciates the pluck of the crippled Dan, who must be night nurse when "Mum" is seriously ill, and his ironic humor that can find even in their worst plight something of the ridiculous. It is not surprising that the crowded flat is often more crowded with friends, Father H., who comes to give the cripples Holy Communion and remains to prepare their breakfast, old friends from the Soho slums, new friends made through the author's first book. In the midst of all this, "serious illness, noise, a room full of people, unwanted interruptions, chatter and the wireless," George Thomas writes. His comments on politics and economics in general are sane and pertinent, but most valuable are those with the bitter savor of intimate knowledge, as when he writes of the exploitation of labor, of unemployment, and the dole, or when he meditates on the meaning of suffering. "The greatest human weakness is not vice but self-pity, and suffering in the ordinary sense is that kind of weakness. . . . Real suffering, while it hurts, helps one to understand the greater glory of the even tenor of existence, that unappreciated level which so easily sways toward joy, peace, and beauty."

In the introduction, V. Sackville-West recalls the deep impression made by Mr. Thomas's first diary, "Tenement in Soho," in 1931. Its successor should produce a similar effect. LUCILE HARRINGTON.

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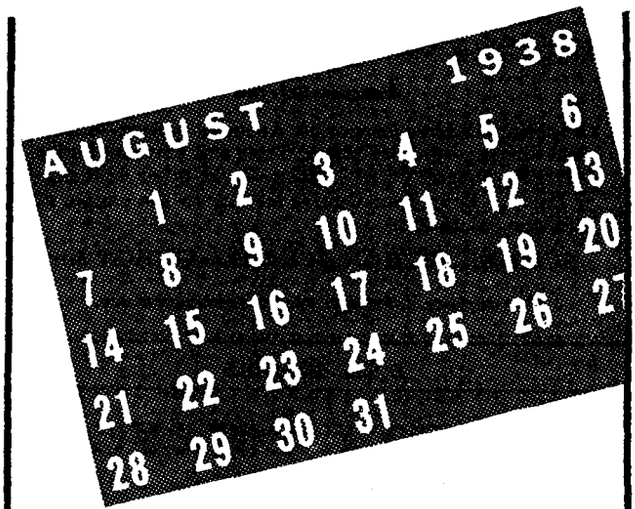

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The Inner Forum

THE *Fides* statistics bureau has published the number of Catholics in the missionary regions of the world under jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda for the years 1937, 1936 and 1927:

	1937	1936	1927
World	21,143,328	20,345,756	14,330,629
Europe	948,180	931,163	771,567
Americas	2,931,024	2,853,511	2,415,323
Oceania	2,557,803	2,506,858	1,911,717
Africa	6,794,951	6,354,997	3,202,993
Asia	7,911,370	7,699,227	6,029,029

New statistics of the Society of St. Peter Apostle for Native Clergy show that there are 356 seminaries in the mission world with 15,979 native students. In China, Mongolia and Manchuria, there are 124 seminaries with 5,566 students; Indo-China and Siam: 31 and 2,215; Japan and Korea: 15 and 534; India: 52 and 1,791; Asia Minor: 2 and 45; Africa: 101 and 4,466; Europe: 9 and 476; America: 4 and 114.

The chief missionary purpose—and obstacle—in the few districts of Europe under Propaganda is to preserve the faith of small minorities living in non-Catholic and non-Christian surroundings. The missionary area of the Americas now includes only a few outlying districts. Difficulties of communication among the scattered islands, and the predominance of Mahomedanism in certain areas are the main obstacles in Oceania. In Africa, missionaries must overcome the difficulties arising from the thin scattering of the population, but these are less serious than the obvious handicaps in Asia.

But even now, during the war in China, missionary activity is being carried on there with all customary energy and, reports show, with heartening success. A great movement of conversions has been in progress around Yenchowfu, Shantung, during the past six months. Some 20,000 persons have asked for instruction from Father Clifford King, S.V.D., who has charge of between 35 and 40 out-stations. In Yunnan, on the distant Burman frontier, the Lahu tribe are gravitating toward the Church. After only three years of missionary work, there are 11,000 catechumens there. The missionary in charge writes: "When peace returns to war-stricken China and we can take stock of headway made, it will be found that catechumens will have risen to about 50,000."

CONTRIBUTORS

Ernest A. DEWEY is associated with the *News* and the *Herald* of Hutchinson, Kan.

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Duce: "My Turn, Adolf!"

is repulsed by still greater forces on the other side—can be passed off without declared war, then there must be new reasoning in international relationships. The question is not whether Japan and Russia are going to war, but how they will decide to conduct their war. Peace is destroyed anyway. How completely it will be destroyed depends on what cooperation the western nations give the belligerents and each other. Increasingly alarmist reports of German military activity south of Czechoslovakia encourage no optimism.

RACIST DEVELOPMENTS continue in Italy along the lines indicated in THE COMMONWEAL last week. The Holy Father has even more specifically stated Catholic doctrine on the matter: "It is forgotten that humankind, the whole of humankind is a single great human race. All men are, above all, members of the same great kind. They all belong to the same great family of the living. Humankind is therefore a single, universal Catholic race. It cannot be denied, however, that in this universal race there is room for special races, as there is for many different variations and for many nationalities which are even more specialized." Such a forthright declaration produced an immediate response from il Duce, who reaffirmed fascist intention to continue the newly declared racial policy. Since then there have been a number of editorial utterances in the official party press, but some American correspondents have noticed a tendency to soft-pedal the issue in non-party papers. It is quite in line with widely-held beliefs that our press adverts to the present racist issue in Italy as an "inevitable battle between the Catholic Church and the Fascist régime." We are not completely certain that this conflict should, in purely theoretical terms, be described as inevitable; yet we are completely certain that for all practical purposes in modern secular civilization the conflict is inevitable, particularly with relation to international peace, social injustice, racism and education. And the present disharmony between the Vatican and the

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Palazzo Venezia can well serve as a warning to those who fondly believe that Catholicism and totalitarian principles can live harmoniously together in the modern, secularist world.

AN ARTICLE by Virginio Gayda in the *Giornale d'Italia* points out that American objections to Italy's racism come with bad grace because of our own aberrations in this department of social justice. Although Signor Gayda's picture of American conditions is so exaggerated as to seem almost silly, yet his general accusation is sound. So long as unwarranted discrimination against negroes continues both in the north and in the south, so long as orientals are distrusted and disliked on the Pacific coast, so long as bitter anti-semitism continues to grow in our urban centers, as *Americans* we cannot reproach Italy. It is particularly saddening that we find it even a little difficult as American Catholics to object to racism since at times many of us individually have been guilty in the same manner. Yet we must protest against racism, and we can strive to reduce its evil influence in our own country, remembering, as is pointed out in the current *Interracial Review,* that "prejudice is both cumulative and contagious," and that it is futile to attempt "to combat a single kind of prejudice while ignoring all other depredations of this grave evil."

The Proper Diagnosis

BRIEF BUT SUPREME was the moment of fame of John Warde, demented youth who defied and thwarted for eleven hours the efforts of New York police and firemen to rescue him from the seventeenth floor ledge of a hotel before finally he plunged to his death. Six persons attended his funeral, but while the drama endured, thousands glued their gaze on him and newspaper and radio flashed his name and antics across the country. Perhaps an unnoticed detail was the fact that when official persuasion failed, much as one might try a series of medical procedures, successively the aid of a psychiatrist and a priest was enlisted, though the victim was non-Catholic. Thus once again we see instanced an age-old confusion. Time was when all maniacs were considered possessed by the devil and therefore in need of an exorcist. Today we have passed to the opposite extreme wherein the merely criminal or vicious or undisciplined are often considered mentally ill and in need of a psychiatrist. Of course neither view is defensible, and it is the psychiatrist today who represents a secularist encroachment upon the domain of religion. The number of mentally troubled whose ailments are directly traceable to neurological deficiencies is sufficiently large to command the full attention of a lusty group of scientists. And indeed most encouraging victories have recently come from such specialists, notably through the use of the insulin shock and artificial fever techniques. But in these days of irreligion, undisciplined wills account for a very large amount of human aberrations. Here the remedies indicated are not psychiatric but moral and religious, and the phychiatrist, like the good shoemaker, will do well to stick to his last. We do not know whether the unfortunate Warde needed a priest or a psychiatrist, or both, but in any event the seventeenth floor ledge of a building was an extraordinarily dramatic place to begin ministering to his needs. Small wonder that thousands watched from the streets below and the country awaited news with bated breath.

A Plea for the Strong Man

By CLEMENT J. FREUND

EVERYBODY knows, of course, that very many brusque, practical men of affairs think that intellectuals are "sissies": those intellectuals, that is, who do nothing more strenuous than writing, lecturing or teaching in order to put into effect the results of their thinking, and that is the only kind of intellectual we shall talk about.

But the intellectuals, who should know better, have begun to despise the man of affairs. If Saint Ignatius Loyola were alive today, I believe the intellectual fraternity would think little of him. The trouble with Saint Ignatius is that he did not properly footnote his "Spiritual Exercises" and did not even prepare a bibliography. He was merely a leader of men, an organizer, and the intellectuals have little respect for such: "Oh, he is just one of those practical fellows with a knack for getting things done. He is not one of the thinkers, he has made no significant contributions."

The practical wisdom of such an attitude of contempt is surely open to question. In the nature of things, strong men of affairs control the treasuries of corporations and enterprises of all kinds. If the intellectuals were to regard the strong men instead of looking down upon them, the strong men, being human, might pay the intellectuals better for their services.

Neither will an attitude of contempt accomplish any public good. In the schools and universities, which are their stronghold, and elsewhere, the intellectuals exert a strong influence upon the most talented young men of the generation. If their influence is colored by scorn for the man of affairs, very few of these talented young men will prepare for administration and most of them will become scholars. Thus the

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universities, to borrow from Dean Holbrook of the University of Pittsburgh, "try to produce scholars with graduate degrees, whose outlet is the teaching of a new generation of students, the cream of whom will become teachers to teach a new generation, and so on, ad infinitum."

If such a perpetual cycle is the only function of a university, if scholars exist only to reproduce themselves, well and good. But we need administrators and need them badly. Scholars are plentiful, and one can obtain abundant learned and valuable information concerning almost any subject or problem. What cannot be found is enough men of power to apply that information for the benefit of mankind. Accordingly it is not unreasonable for us to demand that the intellectuals learn to extol the executive profession, to guide at least some of the ablest young men into that profession and to prepare them for it. We cannot be expected to depend forever upon the occasional genius who rises spontaneously from the ranks to manage our business and the business of the nation.

The intellectuals should train a generation of educated administrators for their own interest. In the nature of things, the strong men take charge of enterprises and the intellectuals are subject to their discipline. This discipline is humiliating to the intellectuals if the strong men are unlettered and crude; if they are educated and refined, the discipline is honorable. The intellectuals will never be the masters, but if they are smart, they can fashion masters to their own liking.

Besides, is there any reason why the intellectuals should scorn the men of affairs? The intellectual has developed great mental capacity and skill by years of study and exercise, but he frequently does not understand men, and is awkward or helpless in dealing with them. The administrator, on the other hand, does understand men and knows how to deal with them; he has good judgment in practical matters, but his formal thinking is apt to go awry. Does the man of affairs appear to be utterly inferior to the intellectual? Hardly.

An illustration may clarify the comparison. Consider the case of the president of a famous and very large manufacturing corporation which has paid dividends regularly for many years. As many another president, he is not a very heavy stockholder and, in actual fact, is merely hired by the board of directors to run the business. He becomes convinced of the justice of Catholic labor and social doctrines, as expounded by Doctors Haas and Ryan and other authorities in the field, and decides to pay even the least of his employees a living wage, and to invite labor unions to organize his plant and to bargain with him concerning wages, hours and working conditions.

In spite of the publicity given to Catholic labor teaching in recent years, the typical American industrialist is not yet enthusiastic about labor unions and increased labor costs. Imagine, therefore, the consternation and indignation in the directors' meeting when the president announces his plan. But before the directors can demand his resignation, he skilfully gains control of the meeting and by his masterful personality, his compelling argument, his diplomacy, his appeal to their social sense, his confident and convincing manner, not only soothes their anger but even wins them over to a sullen and tentative approval of his plan.

But back of the directors are the stockholders who have invested their money to earn a return. The annual stockholders' meeting is usually a perfunctory ceremony which nobody attends who does not have to, but rumors have leaked out, and when the meeting is called, several hundred belligerent stockholders are on hand. The president announces his plan and explains the reasons for it. Questioned by irate stockholders, he admits that the higher wage costs will largely eliminate dividends, and that much of the authority vested in the management will be yielded to outside labor agents under the bargaining agreement.

The meeting threatens to break up in confusion and uproar but the president exercises the same arts which saved the day for him in the directors' meeting, and succeeds in obtaining a scant majority vote in favor of his plan.

He puts the plan into effect, although factions organize to oust him, suits are brought against him, and the business public begins to mistrust his corporation. Year after year the dispute and discontent continue and year after year he fights the battle, and defends his job and his plan. Finally he restores confidence in himself and in his corporation and causes the business to prosper once more, although the stockholders still lament the good old days of five and six percent dividends.

Are the exploits of this "practical fellow with a knack for getting things done" of such trivial import compared with the "significant contributions" of even the greatest scholars in the fields of industry and sociology? Is he such a petty, insignificant figure compared with them? Certainly not.

If the contempt of intellectuals for strong men of affairs is not justified, then the contempt of the strong men for the intellectuals is not justified either. But it is not necessary to say anything in defense of the intellectuals, because they can defend themselves, they can make speeches and write articles and all that sort of thing, and they would probably extend small thanks to an outsider for doing for them what they can doutbless do much better themselves.

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Racism in France

By BERNARD BIERMANN

MOST OF US are familiar, by this time, with the ideas of the racial fanatics in Germany and, now, in Italy. Those in the *Reichskulturkammer* have now been preaching for a year and a day that blood and soil are the only source of all culture, that they provide the foundation upon which is erected the superstructure of all ideologies: religion, morals, law, economy, speech, art, custom. Incidentally this is exactly as Marx put it, and with him all our behaviourists—with this difference, that they rather stress environment as a factor. All this has been shouted out in a fashion that would put to shame the most lurid of our American Sunday paper supplements. This pseudo-science is being popularized, notwithstanding the exact findings of modern ethnology for the past thirty years, the historical school having definitely disproved all such notions by its findings based on the theory of the diffusion of culture.

The disciples of Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Rosenberg base their arguments on the undeniable fact that every nation enters history with its blood relatively "pure" (meaning that primitive exogamic prohibitions, enforced over a long period, have resulted in a fair amount of inbreeding) but that upon making contact with other civilizations, such a nation intermingles with its neighbors and thereby "corrupts" its blood. Thus these men deplore successively the loss of "pure" Germanic blood at the time of the great migrations, the Romanization of Germany, the Christianization of Germany (Boniface and the Irish monks are the great seducers here), Charlemagne's reestablishment of empire (deviation from the "German Mission") and so on. The latter tale is particularly charming. Charlemagne, the Frank, is played out against Widukind, the Saxon chieftain, whom he conquered and upon whom he forced baptism. The latter is represented as a paragon of pagan virtues; the former is called now the *Sachsenschlächter* (Saxon-butcher) and a wishy-washy Frank—spineless as a modern Austrian, because susceptible to foreign culture.

Believe it or not, there are men in France who have taken to these ideas, and put them in a French dress. Do you know who Vercingetorix was? Maybe not, unless you remember your second year Latin in high school, when they forced you to read Caesar's "De Bello Gallico." To cut a long story short: Caesar, in order to recoup his fortunes, had started out upon his campaign of conquest and had subjugated a large part of Gaul, when a Gallic chief by the beautiful name of Vercingetorix succeeded in uniting several indigenous tribes in an effort to make a last stand against the imperial alarums. He lost and, to save his comrades, surrendered to Caesar when besieged at Alesia (present-day Alise Sainte Reine, near Dijon) in 52 B.C.; he was led in Caesar's triumph in 45 B.C. and afterwards was put to death.

Well now, the Frenchman Jullian, member of the French Academy, who died a few years ago, preeminently the historian of the Gauls,[1] took up this moving story and had a host of followers—Dechelette, Bertrand, Marius-Ary Leblond and others. According to Jullian the Gauls were far superior to the Romans of the time. They were big, strong, clean, good, just, original, full of intellectual curiosity, quick-minded, and "if they could think fast, they could perhaps talk still faster. They were the greatest chatterers of all barbarians." Woman was the image of man—his companion and help. If a Gaul was in a fight and called his wife, the adversary fled before this virago, whose fists hammered down upon the enemy with the regularity of a catapult. The patronymic family comes in for praise, as does the omnipotence of the citizen against the state: "Aucune nation de l'antiquité n'a laissé une telle toute-puissance aux personnes humaines et aux groupes qu'elles fondent autour d'elles. La Gaule était la terre de l'individualisme à outrance." In short, they seem to have had just one little defect: a too great liking for alcoholic drinks. Even their admirer Jullian must admit that after one of their frequent drinking bouts they were a sorry sight.

This healthy people was forced into contact with decadent Roman civilization. In vain the noble Verc, the perfect knight, tries to stem the tide but succumbs to the Roman general, who is "a mixture of attractive gifts and insupportable vices." Follows the Romanization of Gaul whereby its high civilization is destroyed through the greed of Roman capitalism. The pure Gauls become the mongrel breed of Gallo-Romans, inheritors of all Roman vices, thus falling an easy prey to Christianity which always thrives on racial chaos. The missionaries fare no better at the hands of these French historians than they do at the hands of their German brethren. It was to the interest of the holy fathers to paint the pagan Gauls in the darkest colors in order to justify a violation of true Gallicism. The whole subse-

[1] *Jullian, Camille, Histoire de la Gaule, Paris: Librarie Hachette,* 1909-1913. 4 *Vols.*

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quent Christianization of Gaul is then decried as a deviation from the Gallic mission. Already, there are people who would have statues of Joan of Arc removed and her place given to the national hero Verc. In short, one who has followed closely the recent German campaign against Charlemagne and the cursed Mediterranean civilization cannot but be struck by the efforts of some Frenchmen to galvanize the dead Verc back into life. It looks as if in France also, *völkisch* history is going to be written. A section of the press has interested itself in the movement, and even groups that dread and hate the Third Reich and all it stands for talk in the best racial fashion.

What is behind all this? For one thing it would seem that the analogy in this matter between France and Germany is not accidental. In both countries, as elsewhere, millions of people have inwardly broken with Christianity without finding a substitute. As man lives by faith, the anti-international reaction that has set in has put the nation in the place formerly reserved for the deity. Many a young Frenchman is disgusted and frightened because of the way the Popular Front has led his country to the brink of ruin and revolution. He looks across the border to the hated foe of yesterday, asking himself in astonishment from whence the latter draws his undeniable dynamism. To ask this question is to answer it.

After all this is good psychology. When a great calamity has befallen an individual or a group, there is need for rationalization. When, in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Roman Empire broke down, many Romans explained this as the result of their people having left the old ways. In 212 the famous edict of Caracalla had granted Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire, thereby giving to Celtiberian and Gaul and Goth and Syrian and African the same status as to Roman. The abolition of the ruling privileges of the premier country, so it was argued, was the beginning of the end, for when Rome came to be everywhere, it was nowhere. A similar argument is heard in France today. It is well known that France knows no color bar. Wherever Frenchmen have settled, they have always freely intermingled with the natives, socially and otherwise, and the egalitarian principles of the great revolution have led to political and economic assimilation as well. The phrase was coined: France *has* not an empire, it *is* an empire. Following the depopulation of the War, the mother country has received several millions of foreigners from all over the world—Russians, Poles, Italians, Spanish, Chinese, Annamites and Africans. Whole regions in the south are becoming negroidized. Many towns are garrisoned by black troops, commanded by black officers; many a country-district looks like North Africa. To make matters worse, a bill recently introduced into Parliament, the so-called *loi Violette* after its maker, the leftist Senator Violette, former governor of Algeria, proposes "to grant political rights to certain categories of Mohammedan natives (Arabs and Berbers) in Algeria, without asking them to renounce their *statut personnel*."

In order to understand the meaning of this, one must know that a decree of the Senate of 1865 declares that the Mohammedan native of Algeria, although a Frenchman, nevertheless will continue to be governed (in matters of domestic relations, property and inheritance) by his personal law, which is based partly on the Koran, partly on custom. The laws of 1900, 1914, 1918 and 1919 have seen successively an extension of native rights. Every Algerian (there are six millions of them) can now become a full French citizen by a simple declaration before a Justice of the Peace that he is foregoing his personal law, this declaration making him subject to the provisions of the French Civil Code. Under the new law he would be able to acquire French citizenship in the same simple fashion, thereby having active and passive suffrage for the French Parliament, in common with the million or so Frenchmen in Algeria and yet retain his own municipal law. What is proposed is, in fact, to permit him to participate in the framing of laws which will not be applicable to him. He will thus have the rights and advantages of citizenship, without at the same time having its duties and liabilities.[2]

Quite naturally an enormous reaction has set in against the bill in question. Undoubtedly it is communist inspired. The *Action Française* has attacked it bitterly, and from various sides it is maintained that if passed it will mean the end of French domination in North Africa.

All this is perilously close to the edge of racism. Let more Frenchmen become unemployed and the familiar cry may be heard, "France for the French." Who knows whether France may not introduce the German distinction between *Staatsbürger* (one enjoying full political and civil rights) and *Staatsangehöriger* (one enjoying only civil rights)? Let no one think France has too liberal a record for that; let no one say racial distinctions are against the best French traditions. Whether or not the new nationalism will take an anti-Christian or anti-Jewish turn no one can foretell, but it is a dangerous road. A few years ago very few people took a serious view of the German agitation against Charlemagne and in favor of a German faith. And yet! In times of spiritual and economic disintegration, people put their faith in strange gods. The dead Vercingetorix may yet play the same rôle in France as his colleague Widukind has played in Germany.

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[2] *Sabatier, Elisée, Les droits électoraux des indigènes musulmans d'Algérie, in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," March,* 1938.

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Our Lady of Montserrat

By BONAVENTURE SCHWINN

TODAY Montserrat continues to be, according to its ancient tradition, a setting for the dramatic and unexpected. The Cortes of the Leftist government, after fleeing Barcelona because of the air raids, have been holding their sessions in the monastic refectory. Where, for so many centuries, silence was broken only by the recitation of Latin prayers and the reading of Sacred Scripture and the Lives of the Saints, now have been resounding the noisy debates of the Socialist, Communist and other deputies. But long before the Cortes sought shelter in the mountain monastery, President Azaña took up his residence there, in the early months of the war when the fall of Madrid seemed imminent.

If Robert Louis Stevenson and Modestine had been touring the land of Don Quixote and the Cid instead of the Cévennes in 1878, they might have discovered Montserrat instead of the quiet and commonplace little monastery of Our Lady of the Snows, about which Stevenson writes so charmingly in "Travels with a Donkey." And on Montserrat they would have found romance, for it is a mountain haunted by the memories of old, mysterious, far-off things and chivalrous, heroic and impossible events that happened long ago, or never happened at all outside the imagination of some medieval romancer. Like the snows that fall upon some mountains and never melt, legends and history have been collecting about Montserrat for nearly the whole of the Christian era.

Thirty-five miles northwest of Barcelona the mountain called Montserrat rises abruptly from the plain of Sardañola to an elevation of four thousand feet, commanding a view of the whole of Catalonia and much of Aragon. It looks down upon Barcelona and out across the sparkling blue waters of the Mediterranean. On a clear day one can see the Balearic Islands lying like a dim cloud on the southeastern horizon one hundred and twenty miles away. To the north and west the white peaks of the Pyrenees, that separate Spain fom France, look surprisingly close in the clear mountain air.

Montserrat probably means the serrated, or saw-like mountain, although according to some authorities the name should be Monsagrat, the sacred mountain. An early Christian legend accounts for the fantastic rock formations that make the mountain's rim look like the teeth of a Cyclopean saw by the earthquake that occurred at the time of the Crucifixion. The invading Arabs saw the parade of rugged pinnacles as a line of sentries and called them "the stone watchmen." In places the towering columns are like the pipes of a vast organ. And in the evening, when darkness has settled upon the plain below and the red and gold light of the setting sun still glows upon the peaks, seeming to set them on fire, they sometimes resemble huge burning tapers. "Another mountain," say Charles Dudley Warner, "so airy, grotesque and flame-like does not exist."

Lying in a notch in the mountain side at an elevation of three thousand feet, the Benedictine abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat recalls the old hexameter verses:

> Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat,
> Oppida Franciscus, celebres Dominicus urbes.

It is reached from Barcelona by an excellent automobile road and by a railway, which, for the last five miles of the ascent from the village of Monistrol, is of the rack-and-pinion type. Both routes climb hills covered with vineyards, wind through lemon and olive groves and look down upon ever-changing panoramas of breath-taking beauty. In modern times the abbey has been noted for its school of music, which Spaniards claim is the oldest in the world, and for its library of valuable manuscripts. The present Prefect of the Vatican Library, Dom Anselm Albareda, who succeeded Cardinal Mercati in 1936, comes from Montserrat, where he was formerly in charge of the abbey library. But Montserrat's greatest glory is La Santa Imagen, or La Moreneta, a small wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin. It is supposed to have been made by Saint Luke and brought to Barcelona by Saint Peter in the year 50.

The statue stands in a niche concealed by two velvet curtains above the high altar in the church. Not quite life-size, it is black with age. The figure of the Madonna is robed in a gold tunic, which is covered by a mantle of brocaded gold, and on her head she wears a veil of rare old lace and a heavy, jeweled gold crown of wonderful workmanship. Her richly shod feet rest upon a cushion. In her right hand is a ball representing the world, and her left hand supports the figure of the Divine Infant and holds a scepter. The figure of the Infant is also vested in brocaded gold and wears a crown. Before the civil war, the curtains were parted and the statue exposed for veneration only once a day, at ten o'clock in the morning. The principal feast of Our Lady of Montserrat is September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

The story of the miraculous statue is inseparably bound up with the legendary account of

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the founding of the abbey and the building of the church. Migne gives the legend as reported by the old chronicler. One evening in the year 880, under the rule of Geoffroy le Velu, Count of Barcelona, three young shepherds saw a great light descend from the sky and at the same time they smelled the fragrance of jasmine and heard music of heavenly sweetness. They went home and told their parents what they had seen and heard. Came the bailif and the bishop of Manresa, a village ten miles north of Montserrat, and a great crowd of peasants from the neighborhood. They too saw the light, which came down and rested over a cave in the mountain side. Upon searching the cave they found the statue of the Blessed Virgin. They attempted to transfer it to Manresa, but when it reached a certain spot, those who carried it were unable to move it farther. This miracle was interpreted to signify the Blessed Virgin's desire that a church in her honor be built on the spot beyond which the statue could not be moved. And this, according to the legend, was the origin of the church and abbey of Montserrat. But Mabillon, after a careful study of the evidence, regarded as certain the existence of a church on Montserrat long before the year 880. It may well be that during the invasion of Catalonia by the Moors in 717, the statue was hidden and later its place of concealment forgotten, and that after being lost for more than a century and a half it was found by shepherds in 880. Whatever truth there may be in the story of the finding of the statue, the date officially given for the founding of the monastery is 1031, when a colony of monks from Ripoll, in northern Catalonia, established themselves on Montserrat.

Richard Wagner drew the inspiration for both the words and the music of his last great music-drama, "Parsifal," from the epic poem of Wolfram von Eschenbach, who lived about 1300. Wagner follows the medieval German legends in locating the castle of the Holy Grail on Montserrat, but he calls it Monsalvat, and he gives the name of the knight, Sir Percivale, as Parsifal. "The action of the drama," says the directions, "is laid in the territory and castle of Monsalvat, on the northern mountain ranges of northern Spain. Klingsor's magic castle is on a southern slope of the same mountains, looking toward Moorish Spain."

According to legend, the Holy Grail was the cup used by Our Lord at the Last Supper and by Joseph of Arimathea to catch the Precious Blood when Christ's side was pierced as He hung upon the cross. Some accounts of the Grail legend tell how Joseph carried the cup, which possessed miraculous powers, to Marseilles, France, while others say that it was taken to England. In Wagner's version, as given in "Parsifal," the cup and the lance with which Our Lord's side was pierced were given into the custody of the pure knight, Titurel, who built for them a magnificent sanctuary on Monsalvat. Titurel, growing old, appoints his son, Amfortas, to succeed him as chief of the knights who guard the Holy Grail and the sacred lance. Near the castle of Monsalvat lives Klingsor, who has been refused admission into the company of the knights of the Grail. Deeply resenting this slight, he has vowed vengeance. To bring about the downfall of the knights, he uses the flower maidens, who live in a magic garden near his castle. At last, trusting in the power of the sacred lance, Amfortas goes to put an end to Klingsor's wicked enchantments. But he falls a victim to the blandishments of Kundry and loses both his peace of conscience and the lance. With it his enemy inflicts a wound upon him which nothing can heal. Amfortas returns in sorrow to Monsalvat. After suffering much from remorse on account of his sin and of his inability to find a remedy for his wound, he sees a vision and hears a voice proclaiming that he will be redeemed by "a guileless fool made wise through pity, who is pure of heart." The guileless fool is Parsifal, who appears, goes in quest of the lance, and successfully resists the wiles of Kundry. Klingsor hurls the lance at him, but it remains suspended above his head. Parsifal takes it and returns to the castle of the Grail. After reclaiming Kundry, he heals Amfortas's wound by the touch of the lance, exposes the Holy Grail for veneration, and becomes king of the knights.

For many centuries the shrine of Our Lady of Montserrat has been a place of pilgrimage; and had there been a Spanish Chaucer, he would have found in the road to Montserrat a colorful setting and rich material for a parallel to "The Canterbury Tales." Before the summer of 1936, more than 60,000 pilgrims visited the sanctuary annually. It has been especially popular with newly-married couples, because in Spain the blessing of La Moreneta is thought to insure a happy wedded life. But one pilgrim to Montserrat stands out above all others. After recovering from the wounds he had received in the defense of Pampeluna against the French on May 20, 1521, Ignatius of Loyola went to Montserrat, where after three days of self-examination he made a general confession. He gave his horse to the monastery, his rich and courtly apparel to the poor and put on sack-cloth. Hanging up his sword and dagger on a pillar of Our Lady's altar, he kept a vigil of arms before the miraculous statue the night preceding the feast of the Annunciation, 1522. He was to take up arms again, but they were to be the arms of the spirit. At daybreak he attended Mass, received Holy Communion, and slipped away unobserved before the crowds of pilgrims began to arrive for the celebration of the feast. An inscription on a marble tablet at the shrine

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commemorates the vigil Saint Ignatius kept there. It reads:

> Ignatius a Loyola hic multa prece fletuque, Deo se Virginique devovit. Hic, tanquam armis spiritualibus, sacco se muniens, pernoctavit. Hinc ad Societatem Jesu fundandem prodiit, anno 1522. F. Laurentius Nicto, abbas, dicavit anno 1603.
>
> (Here Ignatius of Loyola, mingling his tears with his prayers, dedicated himself to God and to the Blessed Virgin. Here, fortified by sack-cloth as by spiritual arms, he kept an all-night vigil. From here he went forth to found the Society of Jesus in the year 1522. Abbot F. Lawrence Nicto consecrated this stone in 1603.)

The next few months Saint Ignatius spent in a cave near Manresa, where he devoted himself to penance and prayer and where he began to write his famous book, "The Spiritual Exercises."

According to a recent report from Spain, the statue of Our Lady in the church on Montserrat at the time it was taken over by the Leftist government was only an imitation that had been substituted for the original several years ago when the danger of a Communist persecution of the Church in Catalonia first arose. The hiding-place of the original statue, it is claimed, is known to only three members of the abbey of Montserrat. If this report is true, a mystery may develop in Spain similar to that of the whereabouts of Saint Cuthbert's body in Durham Cathedral. From the twelfth century to the sixteenth the shrine of Saint Cuthbert at Durham was the most popular center of devotion in the north of England. The saint's body was hidden by the monks before the cathedral was robbed of its treasures under Henry VIII in 1542, and there is a story that since the reformation the place of concealment has been a closely guarded secret known only to three English Benedictine abbots. When one of the three dies, the surviving two communicate the secret to a third.

Mysterious Montserrat with its miraculous statue has been looking down upon Barcelona and the Mediterranean, beholding the varied pageant of Spanish life, during all the centuries of European civilization. It has seen the shuttle of history move from comedy to tragedy and back again many times. It has seen the coming of the Moors in the eighth century and their going in the fifteenth; the rise of the great Spanish universities and the building of the graceful Gothic cathedrals; the heroism of Spain's many saints; the glory of the vast empire of Ferdinand and Isabella, and Charles V, and Philip II, when fleets of proud galleons filled the Spanish treasury with the fabulous gold of the New World. And it has seen that great empire crumble and disintegrate, until almost nothing of it was left. Through it all, unchanged in the midst of change, preserving its calm, with an air of peace and permanence, the old mountain brings to mind the words of the great Spanish mystic, Saint Teresa of Avila:

> Let nothing disturb thee,
> Let nothing affright thee:
> All passeth away;
> God only shall stay.

The strange and glamorous mountain has witnessed many wonders, and in the twentieth century it has beheld a new glory come to pass, such as Old Spain had never known before, the glory of a Spain turned red, not with Anarchism and Communism, but with a deeper dye, when thousands of martyrs have written in their blood a new epic of Christian faith and fortitude.

What of Catholic Movies?

By KATHERINE BRÉGY

THERE were at least a few weeks during the past season when playgoers in New York had the unique experience of finding a Catholic priest as hero or protagonist in three of the leading metropolitan theatres. And a notable thing about these clerics was their very human diversity. In one instance we had Saint Thomas of Canterbury--his outer and inner battles interpreted with extreme delicacy and distinction by Robert Speaight in T. S. Eliot's subtle poetic drama, "Murder in the Cathedral." "Shadow and Substance" brought us, on the other hand, a study of the paradoxical, modern Canon Skerritt: an Irish scholar and gentleman of fastidious taste—obviously the only gentleman in his rural parish—blinded by an almost inescapable pride to the rights of his humble parishioners, yet brought to his knees at last by the ingenuous mysticism of a serving maid. And in the tender study of "Father Malachy" we saw an unworldly Benedictine monk bringing the rightness and humility of Chaucer's Parson into a somewhat jazzed-up fantasy of contemporary life.

These men in their vastly different settings were all real, recognizable priests—so, too, were the rough-diamond Celtic curates whom some resented in at least two of the plays. Authentic, too, was the worldly and other-worldly wisdom of the priest-uncle in O'Neill's "Days Without End." And very real and right and winsome was

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the young Mother Superior in Barry's "Joyous Season"—or the old Mother Superior in Sierra's "Kingdom of God." All of these had personal idiosyncrasies, some of them had faults—like the Jesuits in Emmet Lavery's "First Legion" and at least one of the cardinals in his "Second Spring." Obviously and happily, the religious is returning to our theatre not as a type but as an individual: for the drama does not want mere types of good any more than mere types of evil.

The religious is also emerging in the motion picture. But barring a few such picturesque, incidental clerics as those in "Anthony Adverse" or the romantic heroine of "The White Sister," he and she are emerging in a most impersonal—I had almost said inhuman—form. Is it not curious that the cinema, when it turns directly to Catholicism, should produce such films as "Cloistered" and "Monastery"? Why is it that this youngest and most professedly popular art should sieze upon the ascetic and contemplative life to represent? I think one reason is questionable judgment on the part of the producers, and I fear another is a rather childish curiosity on the part of the audience. In my own city a naive publicity blurb advertised "Monastery" by begging people to come see the "strange rites of the Trappists" and the "secrets of 1900 years [!!] revealed." Only Father Ahern's finely tempered comment made the performance at all intelligible to a general audience. And many a non-Catholic left the theatre needlessly pained by memories of the earth falling upon the dead Trappist's unprotected features, or vulgarly wondering why there were women cooks at the Grand Saint Bernard. I myself found the film—particularly the first, Alpine half—interesting simply as a revelation of one variety of life and heroism. But I confess I was haunted for days and nights by the pitiful, frozen faces of the mountain-climbers who, rescued too late, must lie waiting until spring for identification. And it seemed to me that photograph was entirely superfluous and even morbid.

All Catholics realize, of course, that such contemplative communities as those of Carmel or La Trappe externate a special cross-section of Catholic life—a vocation for the few, not the many. We know that they are no more or less representative of the whole influence of the Church upon mankind than were the medieval anchorites or the primitive Fathers of the Desert. If one stops to think, does not the very tem *ascetic* connote something in common with the *athlete?* It is the spiritual athlete—the man or woman who *exercises* heroically to develop power for some great end. As Father Ahern insists throughout the "Monastery" film, this end is the love of God and of other human beings for God's sake. What the camera catches are, unfortunately, not spiritual ends, but visible and sometimes puzzling means.

Few of us everyday Catholics exercise heroically: comparatively few of us love either man or God—heroically. Perhaps that is why hero-worship holds its universal attraction! Nevertheless we do love, and even in our faulty way we may find love stronger than death. But most of us, as the Church knows so well, must love concretely: and we find it easier to be inspired by one definite and vital hero than by hundreds of ambiguous heroes. So I begin to wonder whether these impersonal Catholic films are on the right track. There was a certain exquisite quality in "Cloistered": it had the simplicity and purity of a marble friese; also, the work of the Good Shepherd nuns has a very practical and obvious appeal. But after all, in the cloistered life it is the interior experience rather than the external form which really matters. And interior experiences—the urge of mystical love, the alternating cycles of spiritual dryness and spiritual ecstasy—are just about the last things that can be revealed upon the screen. It would be indelicate if they could be so revealed: it would be almost more indecent than publicly displaying the secrets of human love.

For this same reason it seems unfortunate that so hidden a life as the "Little Flower's" should recently have been cinematized. On the other hand, Francis of Assisi would offer an almost perfect theme for the motion picture. He is the sort of poet-saint who has always captivated even the secular imagination, and he carries a distinct message to a world still torn by the problems of poverty and riches. Another superb subject is Joan of Arc: only it must be the soldier-saint of history, the martyr-girl canonised by the Church, a woman of deeds, whose few words had the simplicity and efficiency of swords, not Shaw's voluble Saint Joan. For while G. B. S. has given us a very fine play and a very gallant heroine—a woman who, as one of his soldiers declares, "*is* a miracle" whether or not she works miracles—he has hopelessly sentimentalized the trial scene. Saint Vincent de Paul might also offer a highly dramatic if less known story, all the way from his youthful kidnaping and service among the galley-slaves to his work in Paris as court almoner. And Thomas à Becket has already proved his appeal, even to very modern audiences. In picturing such active lives as these, the screen, with its inherent limitations and amazing spaciousness, could continue the work which has been so devoutly yet delightfully done on the French stage by Henri Ghéon: the work of bringing the saints back to the people by means of an artistic "theatre of the saints." Or, if there is an audience for more general Catholic activities — as both "Monastery" and "Cloistered" seem to take for granted—short feature films might illustrate the practical work being carried on today in our various settlements and "houses of hospitality." And

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one can imagine a fascinating screen record of the far-flung Jesuit preoccupations: their missions from Farm Street to India or the Philippines, their achievements in education and literature and science and exploration. Such a film would be highly enlightening to most Catholic and non-Catholic audiences, and as the subject is incurably controversial, it might even contain that dash of sensationalism so dear to the movie-lover's heart.

On the screen, as on the radio, we have an opportunity to speak vividly to an immense but unselected audience. This audience naturally prefers its pictures to be entertaining, although occasionally it will tolerate their being educational. If religious films are frankly and chiefly the latter, surely they need not ignore—any more than a good sermon ignores—the grace or the wit of the former note. Above all their accent should be upon life rather than upon any seeming denial of life, upon that joy which Mr. Chesterton always insisted was the fundamental thing about Christianity even when sorrow or tragedy happened to be its superficial companion. David Goldstein was not alone in deploring the "gloomy psychological atmosphere" of "Cloistered" which became several shades gloomier throughout the scenes of "Monastery." And as we live in a difficult and disappointed age, an age of feverish activity hungry for the belief and even the efficiency it has somehow managed to miss, I should say it was doubly important not to link up spiritual ideals with any appearance of melancholy. Is there really much to be gained by exhibiting to the public intimate pictures of religious congregations so austere that they have no recognizable affinity with the life of Catholics living in the world? To have the facts of Church history interpreted accurately and sympathetically in such medieval themes as "The Crusades" or "Robin Hood," even to have incidental Catholic devotions presented intelligently in modern secular romances would seem to many of us a far greater service. And it could easily be done if a Catholic "technical adviser" were consulted at the studios. In fact it might be just as well to remember that a Catholic film need not be explicitly religious at all. When the motion picture scenario is allowed to become more mature, a Catholic film—like a Catholic poem or play or novel—could treat any human problem whose solution was in harmony with faith. In the meantime we cannot expect subtleties upon the screen or in the majority of the screen audiences. And as Catholicism is a highly intricate as well as a supremely simple thing, with its many angles fitting into one another to build up the mysterious whole, it seems to me the sides to present by way of the motion picture are those likely to carry the most fundamental knowledge and the greatest beauty and inspiration to the largest number of people.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IN THE August number of *The American Mercury*, Mr. Edward L. Bernays has an article entitled "Group Leaders of Democracy," to which special attention has been called by means of a circular letter sent by the management of *The American Mercury* to individuals who are, or who are thought to be, "Group Leaders," in the sense described by Mr. Bernays in his article. The article deserves attention, for as the *Mercury* letter alluded to points out, "Mr. Bernays is recognized throughout the world as United States Publicist No. 1, [who] writes from a life-long experience in counseling America's most important individuals and organizations in their relations with the public. In his article he lays down the principles and outlines the approaches necessary for interpreting to the masses the system under which we have prospered and grown great. What he has to say deserves your particular attention because upon you and group leaders like you, rests the job of preserving our industrial and political democracy."

It is quite unlikely, so it seems to me, that Mr. Bernays contributed his highly suggestive article to the *Mercury* as professional writers generally do, simply as an essay, or thesis, on one subject out of a great number that they might have written about, as part of their ordinary business. It seems far more probable that Mr. Bernays' article is part and parcel of the program suggested by him in the article, a program of reaching and influencing the comparatively small yet supposedly very powerful individuals, the "group leaders" of the country, who in turn influence and at times directly lead the masses of the nation. And that program is one item, I think, in a vast debate, a gigantic controversy, a tremendous battle of propaganda, which is now beginning to flood the United States, bringing us into direct and acute relations with the rising tide of the world revolution.

As Mr. Bernays himself states the matter in his article, "Democracy—that form of government resting on the will of the majority, with a political and industrial structure based on individual freedom and tolerance—is under world-wide attack today." And he fully indicates his belief that the attack on democracy is now proceeding on our shores, although he does not clearly indicate just what facts support his belief, beyond some references to Ku Klux Klan activities in the past and to the late Huey Long. Whether he is as much alarmed by the New Deal, or some of its aspects, as many other publicists and politicians profess to be can only be surmised; but at any rate his alarm is great, and it is particularly lively over what seems to him to be the ominous fact that the signs and portents of the anti-democratic movement have aroused scant notice and little opposition on the part of the great masses of the people.

Before proceeding to indicate what he thinks might be done to arouse the people in defence of democracy, Mr.

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Bernays very properly asks himself the fundamental question, "Is democracy worth preserving?" His answer is a strong affirmation. "Democracy is the only system we know that permits us to harness the complicated technological and economic civilization which modern science and invention and ingenuity have created for us, without the dangers to our liberties that are inherent in other forms of government."

There are, Mr. Bernays allows, obvious injustices and inadequacies in "our present social and economic set-up. Our social vision, thinking and planning have not progressed as rapidly as have our rapid technological improvements. "Nevertheless there has never in the history of mankind been any other system able to produce and distribute so much consumable wealth and national income, in which the standard of living for the average man was so high. It is not a choice of *perfection* versus *democracy*. Nothing human can be perfect."

The problem, then, as Mr. Bernays sees it, is how best can we safeguard "both our basic political and social system and the private enterprise tied up with it." That indeed is only one of many burning questions, but Mr. Bernays turns aside at this most interesting point, saying that he will not "attempt at this time to supply the particular method which is to be utilized," but will confine himself to laying out the approach. He does not tell us his own opinion as to whether the safe and sound reform of traditional American political, economic and social processes will best serve to preserve its fundamental values, or whether reform movements should be abandoned, and a full return made to the predominance of those methods which prevailed, by and large, since the Civil War until quite lately. The rest of Mr. Bernays' article is devoted to an authoritative analysis of the multitudinous groups, organized societies and leagues, in business, labor, the professions, farming, women's clubs, and so forth, whose leaders, in his view, are the most potent factors in the formation of public opinion. In order to preserve democracy, these leaders of groups must be found and won over to the program. . . .

Yes, Mr. Bernays, but whose program? What is the program? Recently, Mr. Bernays tells us, "efforts have been made to bring about a closer understanding between American industry and the great mass of the American people." Apparently, however, these efforts have depended upon "mass media"—great advertising methods, no doubt, by print and radio and motion picture. But Mr. Bernays thinks that much more effective work may be done by reaching the group leaders; so, apparently, the great movement to save democracy should be made and directed by "business"; for, says Mr. Bernays, the problem is for business first to make itself, its motives and action, clear to the leaders, to win leader support—and then to seek broad public support through projecting this leader acceptance."

Well, I can only hope that business will do its honest best—for it is the deep-seated suspicion and dread of business ethics, of the business spirit undirected and uninspired by higher ideals, that is causing the decay of trust in what is called democracy.

Communications

PLAINT OF A CATHOLIC MOTHER

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: May I add a few paragraphs to the "Plaint of a Catholic Mother" and the communications that followed it in your publication? To leave the subject as it now stands, discussed in so limited a way, I feel, might easily do harm. Not all the more prominent causes—real or alleged—of birth control have been mentioned, and the truly terrifying results of all of them put together have scarcely been hinted at. One cause—by no means the most far-reaching one—has been emphasized, namely, social ostracism or even the displeasure of near kin and friends. Two others, the economic and that of health, have at least been mentioned. Both, by the way, are also mentioned in the encyclical of Pius XI on marriage. Neither are new in our day. Nor it is unknown that other than sick people restrict their families and that the wealthy ones restrict theirs more than do the poor. Other causes of some consequence are professional and social interest—the desire for companionship of the opposite sex, but without sacrificing one's job or halting the climb up the social ladder. Not to be overlooked either is the oft-alleged fact that one or two children can be trained better than can a larger number. And, particularly in this day of a pleasure philosophy of life, of a lack of self denial, of self-discipline and self-control, must the highly important cause of selfish pleasure not be passed by. Of what the results of this combination of causes are in our country we were recently given some inkling by the report to the President of the Resources Committee. The report says that this country now sees the shadow of decline hovering on the horizon. The majority report says that the decline will set in by 1980; the minority report says it will set in by 1955 and that by 1980 we will have already slipped backward from our 1955 population by 10,000,000.

But even these terrifying figures give us no true picture of the havoc that is actually being wrought by birth restriction in vast sections of our population. Insofar as natural increase is concerned, our large cities are already rapidly declining. According to two government statisticians, O. E. Baker and T. B. Manny, our cities of 100,000 population and over are only having two-thirds enough children to keep their populations at their present levels, and those ranging from 2,500 to 100,000 have from ten to twenty percent too few to hold their present levels. In other words, were it not for the higher birth rate of our village and farm families, we would already be on the speedy road to decline.

Our future urban prospects are stated as follows by the above-quoted statisticians:

"Ten adults in the large cities are now having about seven children. If the birth rate falls no further, these seven will have less than five children, and these five will have less than three and a half. Three generations, or a century, and such a population, if this trend continues, will have fallen to one-third the present level."

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It is worth observing that many of our larger cities have a high percentage of Catholics. And there is no question that the birth rate in great numbers of our urban parishes is far below that of our rural parishes, and far below what is considered normal. A year or so ago one pastor reported an average of 1.7 children per family in his parish; another reported 1.1. It takes an average of more than 3.0 to keep a population up even to its present number. And not only are individual parishes, but whole dioceses showing the effects of this blight of our day. Diocese after diocese in the more highly urbanized parts of the country is showing a drop in the enrollments in the lower grades of parish schools. Speaking of the surveys regularly made of Catholic elementary school enrollments, the author of an article appearing in *Columbia,* August, 1937, stated:

"Up to 1930, surveys showed an increase from biennium to biennium. Since 1930 there has been a steady decrease in the elementary school enrollment as follows: 1930 to 1932 the loss was 1.3 percent, 1932 to 1934 1.5 percent, and . . . 1934 to 1936 2.6 percent." Reports for individual dioceses bear this out. The Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Hartford in his report referred to the total loss in all types of schools, public and private, in the state of Connecticut between 1927 and 1936 and significantly remarked, "The eight-year decrease is equivalent to the wiping out of eight towns in the state."

Nor does the United States stand alone. The whole Western World is showing the effects of this modern scourge. France for some time has been trying to stem the plague. Germany and Italy have followed suit and with some success. England and the Scandinavian countries are now frantically enlisting the help of the government to stop their dwindling population. An Englishman of no mean standing spoke publicly the other day of England and Wales having a probable population of 4,626,000 a century hence. The Swedish situation is perhaps the worst of all. And Dr. Mydal, noted Swedish population authority, does not mince words either about the facts or their causes. The United States government has given the matter no practical attention. When, and if, it does, it will find out that it is far easier to start a torrent than it is to stop it.

Nor does this evil stand alone. As might well be expected, it is accompanied by the other evils pointed to by Pope Pius, notably the hideous crime of abortion. And perhaps euthanasia is just around the corner. When in a few decades a small youthful population will find itself burdened with a large senile population, will the old pagan practice of getting ride of the old people be revived? We wonder.

We wonder also whether national or racial suicide is less dishonorable than individual self-destruction. We wonder whether the white race is doomed, whether the hardier yellow man will supplant it in leadership. We wonder whether the parents of two or three children—other things being equal—hope for anything like the same reward that the parents of two or three times that number may justly hope for.

EDGAR SCHMIEDELER, O.S.B.

The Stage & Screen

The Summer Theatres

DO THE summer theatres mark a renaissance of the American drama, or are they a last desperate attempt to stem the victorious onrush of the movies? The first is believed by the optimists, the second by the pessimists. But most of us who have followed the return of the theatre to July and August barnstorming will agree with neither. The summer theatres have their uses, as they have their limitations, but they will not save the theatre. This must be done by the American dramatist, and to be frank, he isn't at present particularly well served by the summer playhouses. Of course there are a few which have admirable companies, but even these cannot do justice to a new play in a week's rehearsal. It is possible to give an adequate performance of a play that has already been done, in which the cutting and changes have been executed and the business set, but for a new play the dice are loaded against the author. Indeed it will be better for a playwright to steer well clear of allowing his script to have a summer production, unless he can choose his cast and have at least two weeks' rehearsal. Far from aiding him by showing him the faults of his play, it will discourage him by adding faults which are not there, and if a producer sees the play, unless he is exceedingly intelligent, he will be unable to divorce the faults of the play from the faults of the acting. No. The summer theatre is rarely a boon to the American dramatist.

What then are the real uses of summer theatres? In the first place they do give actors a chance to act, indeed the only chance many of them have today. And they do give producers a chance to see them act, and because of this some of them are engaged for Broadway and even for Hollywood. Some of the direction the actors receive is none too skilful, but some of it is admirable, that is as admirable as it is possible to be in the limited rehearsal period. Then again these theatres do bring the drama to places where for the last twenty years it has been but a name; they do in a limited manner create new theatre-goers; that is, where the performances are not too amateurish, and drive potential theatre-goers back to the movies. But in theatres like those at Skowhegan, and Westport, and Newport, and a half a dozen others, performances are given which often are fully the equal of those given of the same plays on Broadway. Such theatres are doing an invaluable work in spreading the love of the spoken drama.

Yet a summer theatre to do what it really might do ought to be an endowed institution. Only through local pride can its work be made truly artistic and vital. If sufficient funds could be raised in a community to allow actors to rehearse their plays for three weeks before putting them on, something vital might be accomplished. It is up to the communities where these theatres are to make of them something more than a mere experiment. If committees of local residents were formed to raise

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funds for the summer season, and if the players were engaged and rehearsed in the plays in the spring in New York, the summer theatre would become a very different sort of a thing from what it is at present. And yet when all is said and done what is really of importance is the enthusiasm displayed by the players, most of them in their twenties. It shows that the theatre is still able to appeal to youth, and when youth cries "Yes," the "Noes" of the pessimists will be carried away on the wind!

GRENVILLE VERNON.

"Come On and Hear; Come On and Hear"

IF YOU can overlook the plot (and it's quite easy to disregard an inane plot that has to do with very stubborn Alice Faye, who loves hot-headed Tyrone Power, but marries too, too noble Don Ameche, who in turn realizes years later that Alice still loves Tyrone, and so he says to her, "Go somewhere and get a cheap divorce"), if you can overlook this twiddle-twaddle, you'll have a swell time at "Alexander's Ragtime Band." Just sit back, try to forget the story and enjoy Irving Berlin's music, which is really the hero of the picture anyway. And you get your money's worth of Mr. Berlin's tunes from the very beginning, when Tyrone Power's orchestra first plays "Alexander's Ragtime Band" in Dirty Eddie's Place, until the closing number, when he and his gang do a grand finale at Carnegie Hall. There's something nostalgic about the whole affair, something that gets under your skin when the orchestra swings into "Everybody's Doing It," "This Is the Life," "Blue Skies," "Remember," "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody," "Easter Parade." Of course you have to like Irving Berlin's music to care for this picture at all; but that isn't difficult. Beside the complete repertoire of his old numbers you get two new hits, "Now It Can Be Told" and "My Walking Stick," plus the repeated playing of "Alexander's Ragtime Band," which sounds just as good now as it did a quarter of a century ago when it was the rage.

Right in keeping with Paramount's other sugar-coated history lessons is "The Texans." This time it's 1865, and the inhabitants of the Lone Star State realize that they have to fight for a living now instead of fighting the Yankees. However, the dirty dealings of the carpetbaggers force the Texans to make history in a big way. Randolph Scott finally convinces the prettiest little rebel of them all, Joan Bennett, that she can evade the unreasonable cattle tax by driving her cattle from her ranch near the Mexican border to Abilene, Kansas, where the railroad is being put through. So the long exodus starts under Mr. Scott's guidance, with Miss Bennett, May Robson (as Granna who just won't be left at home), Joan's faithful ranchers and 10,000 head of cattle going through deserts, rivers, fires, blizzards, sandstorms and enemy Indian country—all with the carpetbaggers and Yankee troops in hot pursuit. Of course the cattle get through, and Miss Bennett gets her man. The comedy relief of May Robson and Walter Brennan is a bit overdone, yet his characterization is the best in the picture. The reconstruction period in Texas deserves better treatment than "The Texans."

PHILIP HARTUNG.

Books of the Day

Labor Unions and Liberty

Civil Liberties and Industrial Conflict, by Roger N. Baldwin and Clarence B. Randall. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. $1.50.

THIS book comprises four lectures delivered at Harvard University under the Godkin Foundation. Mr. Baldwin is well known as the Director of American Civil Liberties Union, but speaks in a personal and not an official capacity. Mr. Randall is the vice-president of the Inland Steel Company, and is likewise voicing his own opinions, not necessarily those of his company. Each presents a clear, temperate and highly readable statement of his point of view on labor relationships, picketing, sit-down strikes, strike violence, and many similar matters. A foreword states that neither speaker saw the manuscript of the other, that they engaged in no public debate, and that the papers appear exactly as delivered. An interesting and useful book would have been made more interesting and decidedly more useful if a somewhat different procedure had been used. As it is, neither author directly meets the other's arguments at many of the most crucial points.

Both profess to believe in the democratic process and in the maintenance of civil liberties. Mr. Baldwin holds that industry is autocratically governed and that this must result in undermining political democracy, unless workers are organized in powerful unions, independent alike of employers and of the state, and the practice of collective bargaining with their unions is wholeheartedly accepted by the management. He contends that employers have used coercion and violence in their effort to prevent the development and recognition of unions; that such employers together with political authorities subservient to them, such as Mayor Hague of Jersey City, have "long created in the United States areas not dissimilar to those under Fascist control"; and that in comparison the violence used by strikers is a very minor problem. He cites figures which appear to show that "in seven months of major strife in 1937 alone" twenty-four strikers were killed on picket lines and 490 wounded and injured. . . . On the side of the employers or the public authorities, the record of 1937 shows only one person killed, a police officer in the aluminum strike at Alcoa, Tennessee, under A. F. of L. auspices. It shows only twenty persons injured among strikebreakers and officers of the law." Mr. Baldwin professes to be optimistic, however, about the future since "the employers of the United States have on the whole accepted, though reluctantly, the new era of labor organization and collective bargaining." Indeed he believes that "75 percent to 80 per cent of the employers in industries where labor organizers abide by the law [National Labor Relations Act, etc.] without resistance," an estimate which strikes this reviewer as high. As a result, at any rate, of this state of affairs, Mr. Baldwin believes we have a chance to prevent fascism in this country and to work out our economic problems by peaceful process.

Mr. Randall does not directly meet the issue of the significance to democracy of a complex industrial economy, a strong labor movement and the acceptance of collective bargaining. But he refers with apparent disapproval to the fact that the "strikes that have taken place have not

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concerned themselves mainly with wage levels, or even primarily with working conditions, but have had for their objective the furtherance of the organization of the workers in the country into a few great systems of affiliated unions." He does not deny that employers have "made mistakes," but the only specific instance he cites is "sweatshops," which seems fairly remote from problems of the steel industry. The business executives in that industry have been "selected for their intelligence and honesty." When men "bearing such responsibilities take firm positions on controversial questions you may be sure that they do so because of deep conviction that what they are doing is right." This is not the case with typical strike leaders, "whose comfortable jobs and steady incomes will be unaffected by the closing of the plant." Mr. Randall's chief concern is to defend against such parasites the "man who had a job and liked it," who felt that he and his corporate employers "were all working together, that before he finished he would be a lot nearer the top than when he began, and he was very certain that the curly-headed boy who ran to meet him when he came home at night would go a lot further than he had"—the man who is and wants to continue to be an individualist, looking out first for himself and the curly-headed boy.

After commenting on such phenomena as sit-down strikes and mass picketing, Mr. Randall employs in connection with the recent organization and strike movement in our basic industries such expressions as "incipient anarchy" carried "one step forward in the direction of open revolution," and asks: "Can we possibly be so blind as not to see that out of the unlicensed tyranny of such mob movements came the appalling destruction of all liberties in the dictator-governed nations of Europe?" Thus on the whole he regards as a manifestation of fascism and communism and of the abrogation of democracy that movement of recent years which Mr. Baldwin considers a bulwark against fascism and communism.

Because Mr. Randall is so obviously a man of sincerity and high motives, while seeming to be a bit of a Pharisee in his thinking about himself and his fellow-executives in comparison with trade union leaders and a bit naive in some of his economic and political science, he is representative of a large section of public opinion in this country. He has done a great service in stating his attitude so plainly and honestly. And one would like to sit down and talk with him about certain things. About how a couple of decades ago many Britishers believed that Ben Tillett and Philip Snowden and Ramsay MacDonald were "carrying incipient anarchy one step forward in the direction of open revolution," but actually were leading in the establishment of a strong labor movement and the acceptance of collective bargaining. And about how the kind of strikes which he fears seem to threaten to rend the fabric of society occur precisely in the unorganized industries where there are no strong unions. And about how there has never been an extremist and violent revolution of the Left in a country with a strong and legally recognized labor movement, and about how, on the other hand, the first move of a fascist dictatorship is to smash the trade unions. And about the significance of the fact that under dictatorships of both the Right and the Left, regardless of the color of shirt they wear, where there are no genuinely free workers' organizations, independent alike of employers and of the state, there are presently no churches left free to proclaim and practise the Christian faith. A. J. MUSTE.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Communism and Man, by F. J. Sheed. New York: Sheed & Ward. $2.00.

THE times are gone when Catholic authors, discussing Communism, merely inveigh against Antichrist. Modern writers like Sheed do not indulge in so easy an emotional reaction; they honestly try to understand the motives of Marxism and are willing to give it fair criticism.

This small and popular book captivates the reader by its sincerity in setting forth the ideas of Karl Marx and claiming that at least they have helped to clarify the economic situation. No doubt Sheed knows his Marx and offers a good popular analysis of his chief ideas. His principal objection to Marxism is a philosophical one; he rightly claims Marx's trivial conception of human nature lies at the root of his major errors.

Strangely enough the author is more interested in the sociological than in the metaphysical side of Marxism and too often meets its pretensions halfway. He overrates the relationship of Marxism with the social ideas in the Papal "labor" encyclicals. And in repudiating the atheistic background of Marxism, Sheed is not as emphatic as one might wish him to be. Communism is not only "constructed and carried out without reference to God"; in fact it repudiates religion with contempt and substitutes for it a fool's paradise in the shape of a pseudo-religious myth.

Seeking this utopia the Communist, in addition to his striving after social justice, endangers all personal liberty, advocates blasphemy, promotes upheavals and terrorisms. Christian criticism should focus its attention upon maintaining the value of every single human soul, upon the sanctity of human life and the strict relativity of any merely earthly goal.

C. O. CLEVELAND.

A Southerner Discovers the South, by Jonathan Daniels. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.00.

JONATHAN DANIELS is a son of Josephus Daniels, a life resident of Raleigh, N. C., and editor of the Raleigh *News and Observer*. The trip he describes in this book was intelligently planned, and the author made good use along the way of the opportunities open to him through his family, his profession and his nature, to see colorful and significant things and speak with interesting and important persons—many of them important because of their power, such as governors, state and federal administrators, educators, business and union leaders, and others because they symbolize whole classes of share croppers or mill hands or dispossessed Negroes. The purpose of the trip was evidently to see Southerners and not to instruct them, and the book describes the South to us, and does not propose a scheme for its rehabilitation.

The prose does not swing along in the reading, and the book gathers interest somewhat slowly. But by the time the writer has gone through the TVA and reached the "delta" of the Mississippi (below Memphis; not New Orleans) and has driven into the real deep South, the cumulative effectiveness is great, and the interest, perhaps in part because that country is less familiar than the nearer South, is very high.

There are essays, or interviews, or good reportorial sketches covering Arlington, Williamsburg, the Carolina mills, TVA, the Dyess and Hillhouse rehabilitation projects and the great plantation of the Delta and Pine Land

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Company; Natchez, Vicksburg, Louisiana and Louisiana politics; the Gulf, Birmingham, Atlanta, Charleston, Dr. Herty's Pulp and Paper Laboratory, Raleigh and most of the places in between. More important are the persons Mr. Daniels conversed with so engagingly at every stop. Of course a description of all these involves interpretation. The interpretation is always liberal, barren of any ideology, secular, and skeptical of simplicity of explanation. This lack of positive judgment makes the book somewhat vague and inconclusive, if not unfinished. The purpose it serves is to make us see the South, see the symptoms of its problems, which are so enormous, and have at least a passive sympathy for the people, white and black—all, Mr. Daniels believes, in the same boat. It is possible that the author is suspending his social and economic judgment, because one question frequently recurs in his book: "It is the old controversy between those who believe that the people must be ruled by law and those who believe that if the people have a chance to make an intelligent choice their choice will be intelligent." Mr. Daniels is certainly the kind of man inclined to favor the method of choice (as, by the way, he tells us Mr. Lilienthal is more than inclined, as contrasted with Mr. A. E. Morgan), but he apparently waits until the South is offered a choice before declaring himself. "A Southerner Discovers the South" is an ably and agreeably expressed catalogue of the things a Southerner can wish if he has a free choice. Many of the present alternatives are tragic, some that are there at least potentially are magnificent. PHILIP BURNHAM.

FICTION

The Fishmans, by H. W. Katz. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.

THIS is a first novel written in France by a young German Jew of thirty who is an exile from the contemporary *furor Teutonicus,* with which, by the way, it does not directly deal. Perhaps the several factors of immaturity, poverty and banishment should be kept in mind while attempting to appraise in its full values this latest cry of self-expression from the contemporary and over-loaded Jewish soul. For it must be added that the novel has been highly praised by such German writers as Bruno Frank, who states that "every slight detail has the value of an enduring symbol," and by Lion Feuchtwanger, who sees in the author "a poetic vision of life as a colorful fairy story which, at its best, achieves the artistry and wisdom of a Hans Christian Andersen tale." The book, moreover, has won the recognition of the Heinrich Heine Prize, awarded by a group of German writers now resident in France.

It is very curious how such phrases, common to book reviewers and fellow authors, can tickle the reader's fancy, or else stir his indignation, because they strike him not only as wide of the mark but planted about ten miles away from it. This prize novel may have many virtues, especially in the original, but "artistry" is about the last word I would have employed in reference to it, unless "poetic vision of life" be counted as almost as bad a howler in the same connection. In fact, here is not a novel at all, as we understand the term, but a string of recitals and reminiscences, loosely linked together, and most of them sordid and painful in the extreme. As the author says himself early in his narrative: "Many stories were told me of the life of my grandfather Fishman, my grandmother, and my father Yossel in the hamlet of Strody"—Strody in Galicia in the days when it was Austrian territory before the war, when its Jewish denizens had little worse to fear than the dull hatred and brutal contempt of the peasant. Far from Herr Katz's vision of his youth being like a colorful Andersen fairy story, this whole Galician section, occupying the main portion of the book, seems etched in mud. The German winner of the Heine Prize makes his personal contribution here to that excremental type of naturalism which issued from Zola, which seems only recently to have reached our own literature and of which (though I am far from being squeamish) I am getting heartily tired.

For the motto to his novel, Herr Katz has adopted Hugo's noble words in the preface to "Les Miserables": "So long as there are ignorance and misery in the world, books of this kind cannot be useless." Noble words in effect; but we suggest that all the bitterness and racial hardship, and all the pain, in short the raw material that has gone into this book, might have been purged and purified by a certain artistry so that the novel could be deeply and truly useful. CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

The Youngest Disciple, by Edward Thompson. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

MR. THOMPSON, author of "Burmese Silver," is a novelist deeply versed in the history and religions of India. Now he has made a judicious concoction of much legend and little fact and re-created a sympathetic tale of Gotama, the founder of Buddhism.

Of Gotama, or Buddha, little is known. His father seems to have been a petty rajah ruling over a small community on the southern border of the present-day Nepal and, if tradition is true, the boy exercised a prince's privilege and maintained an extensive harem. His principal wife bore him a son but the pleasures of the world soon palled on Gotama and he retired to the forest to lead the life of a hermit. After seven years, during which his health was almost ruined by austerities, Gotama began to devote himself to long hours of meditation. The result was that he thought he had discovered how to escape the misery of rebirth and attain the ever-desired Nirvana, or non-being. He began to preach this new doctrine, that only by killing all desires can man escape disappointment, around Benares, and attracted thousands of adherents, principally because he was a kind, gentle-hearted man who opened up his cult to all, a contrast to the Brahmins who were ever caste-conscious. Buddha was a contemporary of Pythagoras and Confucius and died about 480 B. C., aged eighty years.

Mr. Thompson has presented "The Lord" in a kindly light while telling the tale of a young pariah, Panchkori, who became a Buddhist monk and thereby secured eternal happiness. The book is a clear and graceful narrative which throws some light on a religion which today claims more than 100,000,000 adherents.

Some critics have compared the shaven monks of Gotama with their wooden beggar bowls to the Friars of St. Francis who saw in voluntary poverty a remedy for the social injustice of medieval Italy. But there the analogy must stop, for Buddhism, although a creed of gentleness, of peace, of chastity, is rooted in a deep pessimism. It would have no Christian hope and the depressing doctrine of *karma* pervades its very being. Although one may conceive of a false sense of security in Gotama's religion, in reality it has little more vigor than a dying orchid. MARY FABYAN WINDEATT.

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The Barley Fields, by Robert Nathan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.00.

IN the note which Mr. Nathan has prefaced to this reprinting of five novels of ten years ago he thus challenges the ideological predilections of the literary moment: "Perhaps it is not necessary to prove anything. Perhaps it is enough to say: We lived; and these were our hopes and our worries, our joys and our fears. This is the way we spoke, if not altogether with our tongues, at least with our hearts."

I suspect Mr. Nathan had more of a thesis in these delightful stories than he knew. At any rate it is this element that most precisely dates them. That a certain sort of Puritanism is very hard on love and the lover was not exactly a discovery of ten years ago, but it was certainly one of the main literary preoccupations of the time. What was not so widely recognized was that this type of Puritanism is even harder on religion. That is why Mr. Nathan's Mr. Lewis, né Levy, who looks in vain for "Jesus and the angels" in the heaven of pure salvation is a more original and a profounder figure than the scared women and the shamefaced men shared with so many writers of the period.

Another secret of the enduring interest of these stories is that they present real people, behaving like recognizable human beings. Ideas date; human nature does not, particularly in the two extremes of the great things and the trifles. Little Metabel of the dancing feet and the dancing heart, who would not have her good-for-nothing father a mouse's tail different, is an exquisite creation. So is the professor of Semitic languages who knew love only from the poets but knew how to be a friend to the lonely child who arrived too soon in the terribly orderly and domestic heaven. The author's genius is especially for the odd, but he has a quick eye for the unlooked-for in all of us.

Finally there is one thing in these stories that should command an immeasurably wider response in the next ten years than in the last, and that is the delightful blend of fantasy and good-tempered satire in all the telling. The situation of the up-and-coming bishop who concluded that only an angel would do for the archdeacon he needed, and who got the angel, is only one instance. Not since James Stephens' "Crock of Gold" has the present reader come across so delicate a brew. HELEN C. WHITE.

MISCELLANEOUS

The New International Year Book edited by Frank H. Vizetelly. New York: Funk and Wagnalls. $6.25.

WITH associate editors and contributors who are authorities in their special fields, Dr. Vizetelly again presents a compendium of the world's progress for the past year that is an invaluable adjunct to any library. General unrest throughout the world marked 1937, and here are faithfully recorded trends as well as events of importance, presented in encyclopedic form. C. N.

The Fun of Photography, by Mario and Mabel Scacheri. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. $3.50.

THE WELL directed effort of this book is not to teach the technology of cameras, but to stimulate the seeing eye of camera owners, and call upon their intelligence and imagination in "making"—not simply "taking"—their pictures. Three hundred seventy-five pictures help drive home the point that the person and not the machine largely governs the result. A very good and helpful book, free from faddishness. P. B.

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